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A PATIO

THE CANARY ISLANDS

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CANARY ISLANDS

I

TENERIFFE

PROBABLY many people have shared my feeling of disappointment on landing at Santa Cruz. I had long ago realised that few places come up to the standard of one's preconceived ideas, so my mental picture was not in this case a very beautiful one; but even so, the utter hideousness of the capital of Teneriffe was a shock to me.

Unusually clear weather at sea had shown us our first glimpse of the Peak, rising like a phantom mountain out of the clouds when 100 miles distant, but as we drew nearer to land the clouds had gathered, and the cone was wrapped in a mantle of mist. There is no disappointment attached to one's first impression of the Island as seen from the sea. The jagged range of hills seemed to come sheer down to the coast, and appeared to have been

torn and rent by some extraordinary upheaval of Nature; the deep ravines (or *barrancos* as I afterwards learnt to call them) were full of dark blue mysterious shadows, a deeply indented coast-line stretched far away in the distance, and I thought the land well deserved to be called one of the Fortunate Islands.

Santa Cruz, or to give it its full title, Santa Cruz de Santiago, though one of the oldest towns in the Canaries, looked, as our ship glided into the harbour, as though it had been built yesterday, or might even be still in course of construction. Lying low on the shore the flat yellow-washed houses, with their red roofs, are thickly massed together, the sheer ugliness of the town being redeemed by the spires of a couple of old churches, which look down reprovingly on the modern houses below. Arid slopes rise gradually behind the town, and appear to be utterly devoid of vegetation. Perched on a steep ridge is the Hotel Quisisana, which cannot be said to add to the beauty of the scene, and all my sympathy went out to those who were condemned to spend a winter in such desolate surroundings in search of health.

Probably no foreign town is entirely devoid of

interest to the traveller. On landing, the picturesque objects which meet the eye make one realise that once one's foot has left the last step of the gangway of the ship, England and everything English has been left behind. The crowd of swarthy loafers who lounge about the quay in tight yellow or white garments, are true sons of a southern race, and laugh and chatter gaily with handsome black-eyed girls. Sturdy country women are settling heavy loads on their donkeys, preparatory to taking their seat on the top of the pack for their journey over the hills. Their peculiar head-dress consists of a tiny straw hat, no larger than a saucer, which acts as a pad for the loads they carry on their heads, from which hangs a large black handkerchief either fluttering in the wind, or drawn closely round the shoulders like a shawl.

Here and there old houses remain, dating from the days when the wine trade was at its zenith, and though many have now been turned into consulates and shipping offices, they stand in reproachful contrast to the buildings run up cheaply at a later date. Through many an open doorway one gets a glimpse of these cool spacious old houses, whose broad staircases and deep balconies surround

a shady *patio* or court-yard. On the ground floor the wine was stored and the living rooms opened into the roomy balconies on the first floor. Here and there a small open Plaza, where drooping pepper trees shade stone seats, affords breathing-space, but over all and everything was a thick coating of grey dust, which gave a squalid appearance to the town. Narrow ill-paved streets, up which struggle lean, over-worked mules, dragging heavy rumbling carts, lead out of the town, and I was thankful to shake the dust of Santa Cruz off my feet; not that one does, as unless there has been very recent rain the dust follows everywhere. An electric tramway winds its way up the slopes behind the town at a very leisurely pace, giving one ample time to survey the scene.

The only vegetation which looks at home in the dry dusty soil is prickly pear, a legacy of the cochineal culture. In those halcyon days arid spots were brought into cultivation and the cactus planted everywhere. In the eighteenth century the islanders had merely regarded cochineal as a loathsome form of blight, and it was forbidden to be landed for fear it should spoil their prickly pears, but prejudice was overcome, and

when it was realised that a possible source of wealth was to be found in the cultivation of the cactus, *Opuntia coccinellifera*, which is the most suited to the insect, the craze began. Land was almost unobtainable; the amount of labour was enormous which was expended in breaking up the lava to reach the soil below, in terracing hills wherever it was possible to terrace; property was mortgaged to buy new fields; in fact, the islanders thought their land was as good as a gold-mine. The following figures are given by Mr. Samler Brown to show the extraordinary rapidity with which the trade developed. "In 1831 the first shipment was 8 lb., the price at first being about ten pesetas a lb.; in ten years it had increased to 100,566 lb., and in 1869 the highest total, 6,076,869 lb., with a value of £789,993." The rumour of the discovery of aniline dyes alarmed the islanders, but for a time they were not sufficiently manufactured seriously to affect the cochineal trade, though the fall in prices began to make merchants talk of over-production. The crisis came in 1874, when the price in London fell to 1*s.* 6*d.* or 2*s.*, and the ruin to the cochineal industry was a foregone conclusion. Aniline

dyes had taken the public taste, and though cochineal has been proved to be the only red dye to resist rain and hard wear, the demand is now small, and merchants who had bought up and stored the dried insect were left with unsaleable stock on their hands. Retribution, we are told, was swift, sudden, and universal, and the farmer who had spent so much on bringing land into cultivation foot by foot, realised that the cactus must be rooted up or he must face starvation.

Possibly there are many other people as ignorant as I was myself on my first visit to the Canaries on the subject of cochineal. Beyond the fact that cochineal was a red dye and used occasionally as a colouring-matter in cooking, I could not safely have answered any question concerning it. I was much disgusted at finding that it is really the blood of an insect which looks like a cross between a "wood-louse" and a "mealy-bug," with a fat body rather like a currant. The most common method of cultivation, I believe, was to allow the insect to attach itself to a piece of muslin in the spring, which was then laid on to a box full of "mothers" in a room at a very high temperature.

The muslin was then fastened on to the leaf of the cactus by means of the thorns of the wild prickly pear. When once attached to the leaf the *madre* cannot move again. There were two different methods of killing the insect to send it to market, one by smoking it with sulphur and the other by shaking it in sacks. A colony of the insects on a prickly pear leaf looks like a large patch of lumpy blight, most unpleasant, and enough to make any one say they would never again eat anything coloured with cochineal.

This terraced land is now cultivated with potatoes and tomatoes for the English market, but the shower of gold in which every one shared in the days of the cochineal boom is no more, though the banana trade in other parts of the island seems likely to revive those good old days.

La Laguna, about five miles above Santa Cruz, is one of the oldest towns in Teneriffe; it was the stronghold of the Guanches and the scene of the most desperate fighting with the Spanish invaders. To-day it looks merely a sleepy little town, but can boast of several fine old churches, besides the old Convente de San Augustin which has been turned into the official seat of learning, containing a very

large public library, and the Bishop's Palace which has a fine old stone façade. The cathedral appears to be in a perpetual state of repairing or rebuilding, and though begun in 1513 is not yet completed. One of the principal sights of La Laguna is the wonderful old Dragon tree in the garden of the Seminary attached to the Church of Santo Domingo, of which the age is unknown. The girth of its trunk speaks for itself of its immense age, and I was not surprised to hear that even in the fifteenth century it was a sufficiently fine specimen to cause the land on which it stood to be known as "the farm of the Dragon tree."

Foreigners regard the town chiefly as being a good centre for expeditions, which, judging by the list in our guide-book, are almost innumerable. One ride into the beautiful pine forest of La Mina should certainly be undertaken, and unless the smooth clay paths are slippery after rain the walking is easy. After a long stay in either Santa Cruz or even Orotava, where large trees are rare, there is a great enchantment in finding oneself once more among forest trees, and what splendid trees are these native pines, *Pinus canariensis*, and in damp spots one revels in the ferns and mosses,

which form such a contrast to the vegetation one has grown accustomed to.

Alexander von Humboldt who spent a few days in Teneriffe, on his way to South America, landing in Santa Cruz on June 19, 1799, was much struck by the contrast of the climate of La Laguna to that of Santa Cruz. The following is an extract from his account of the journey he made across the island in order to ascend the Peak: "As we approached La Laguna, we felt the temperature of the atmosphere gradually become lower. This sensation was so much the more agreeable, as we found the air of Santa Cruz very oppressive. As our organs are more affected by disagreeable impressions, the change of temperature becomes still more sensible when we return from Laguna to the port, we seem then to be drawing near the mouth of a furnace. The same impression is felt when, on the coast of Caracas, we descend from the mountain of Avila to the port of La Guayra. . . . The perpetual coolness which prevails at La Laguna causes it to be regarded in the Canaries as a delightful abode.

"Situated in a small plain, surrounded by gardens, protected by a hill which is crowned by a

wood of laurels, myrtles and arbutus, the capital of Teneriffe is very beautifully placed. We should be mistaken if, relying on the account of some travellers, we believed it rested on the border of a lake. The rain sometimes forms a sheet of water of considerable extent, and the geologist, who beholds in everything the past rather than the present state of nature, can have no doubt but that the whole plain is a great basin dried up."

"Laguna has fallen from its opulence, since the lateral eruptions of the volcano have destroyed the port of Garachico, and since Santa Cruz has become the central point of the commerce of the island. It contains only 9000 inhabitants, of whom nearly 400 are monks, distributed in six convents. The town is surrounded with a great number of windmills, which indicate the cultivation of wheat in these higher countries. . . ."

"A great number of chapels, which the Spaniards call *ermitas*, encircle the town of Laguna. Shaded by trees of perpetual verdure, and erected on small eminences, these chapels add to the picturesque effect of the landscape. The interior of the town is not equal to the external appearance. The houses are solidly built but very antique, and the streets

seem deserted. A botanist should not complain of the antiquity of the edifices, as the roofs and walls are covered with Canary house leek and those elegant *trichomanes* mentioned by every traveller. These plants are nourished by the abundant mists. . . ."

"In winter the climate of Laguna is extremely foggy, and the inhabitants complain often of the cold. A fall of snow, however, has never been seen, a fact which may seem to indicate that the mean temperature of this town must be above 15° R., that is to say higher than that of Naples. . . ."

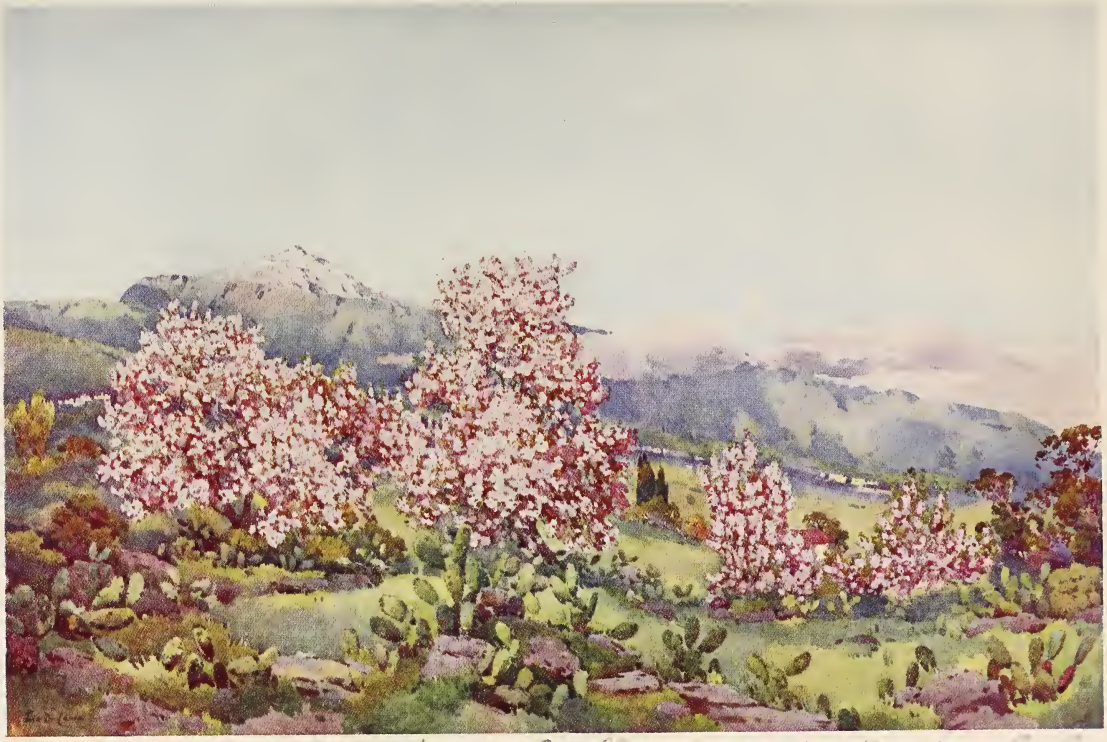
"I was astonished to find that M. Broussonet had planted in the midst of this town in the garden of the Marquis de Nava, the bread-fruit tree (*Artocarpus incise*) and cinnamon trees (*Laurus cinnamonum*). These valuable productions of the South Sea and the East Indies are naturalised there as well as at Orotava."

The most usual route to Tacoronte *en route* to Orotava, the ultimate destination of most travellers, is by the main road or *carretera*, which reaches the summit of the pass shortly after leaving La Laguna, at a height of 2066 feet. The redeeming feature of the otherwise uninteresting

road is the long avenue of eucalyptus trees, which gives welcome shade in summer. If time and distance are of no account, and the journey is being made by motor, the lower road by Tejina is far preferable. The high banks of the lanes are crowned with feathery old junipers, in spring the grassy slopes are gay with wild flowers, and here and there stretches of yellow broom (*spartium junceum*) fill the air with its delicious scent. Turns in the road reveal unexpected glimpses of the Peak on the long descent to the little village of Tegueste, and below lies the church of Tejina, only a few hundred feet above the sea. Here the road turns and ascends again to Tacoronte, and the Peak now faces one, the cone often rising clear above a bank of clouds which covers the base.

At Tacoronte the tram-line ends and either a carriage or motor takes the traveller over the remaining fifteen miles down through the fertile valley to Puerto Orotava. The valley is justly famous for its beauty, and in clear winter weather, when the Peak has a complete mantle of snow, no one can refrain from exclaiming at the beauty of the scene, when at one bend of the road the whole valley lies stretched at one's feet, bathed in sunshine

ALMOND BLOSSOM, VALLEY OF OROTAVA



OROTAVA Valley, TENERIFE Island

and enclosed in a semi-circle of snow-capped mountains. The clouds cast blue shadows on the mountain sides, and here and there patches of white mist sweep across the valley; the dark pine woods lie in sharp contrast to the brilliant colouring of the chestnut woods whose leaves have been suddenly turned to red gold by frost in the higher land. In the lower land broad stretches of banana fields are interspersed with ridges of uncultivated ground, where almond, fig trees and prickly pears still find a home, and clumps of the native Canary palm trees wave their feathery heads in the wind. Small wonder that even as great a traveller as Humboldt was so struck with the beauty of the scene that he is said to have thrown himself on his knees in order to salute the sight as the finest in the world. Without any such extravagant demonstration as that of the great traveller, it is worth while to stop and enjoy the view; though, to be sure, carriages travel at such a leisurely rate in Teneriffe, one has ample time to survey the scene. The guardian-angel of the valley—the Peak—dominates the broad expanse of land and sea, in times of peace, a placid broad white pyramid. But at times the mountain has become angry and waved

a flaming sword over the land, and for this reason the Guanches christened it the Pico de Teide or Hell, though they appear to have also regarded it as the Seat of the Deity.

Humboldt himself describes the scene in the following words: "The valley of Tacoronte is the entrance into that charming country, of which travellers of every nation have spoken with rapturous enthusiasm. Under the torrid zone I found sites where Nature is more majestic and richer in the display of organic forms; but after having traversed the banks of the Orinoco, the Cordilleras of Peru, and the most beautiful valleys of Mexico, I own that I have never beheld a prospect more varied, more attractive, more harmonious in the distribution of the masses of verdure and rocks, than the western coast of Teneriffe.

"The sea-coast is lined with date and cocoa trees; groups of the *musa*, as the country rises, form a pleasing contrast with the dragon tree, the trunks of which have been justly compared to the tortuous form of the serpent. The declivities are covered with vines, which throw their branches over towering poles. Orange trees loaded with flowers, myrtles and cypress trees encircle the chapels

reared to devotion on the isolated hills. The divisions of landed property are marked by hedges formed of the agave and the cactus. An innumerable number of cryptogamous plants, among which ferns most predominate, cover the walls, and are moistened by small springs of limpid water.

"In winter, when the volcano is buried under ice and snow, this district enjoys perpetual spring. In summer as the day declines, the breezes from the sea diffuse a delicious freshness. . . .

"From Tegueste and Tacoronte to the village of San Juan de la Rambla (which is celebrated for its excellent Malmsey wine) the rising hills are cultivated like a garden. I might compare them to the environs of Capua and Valentia, if the western part of Teneriffe were not infinitely more beautiful on account of the proximity of the Peak, which presents on every side a new point of view.

"The aspect of this mountain is interesting, not merely from its gigantic mass; it excites the mind, by carrying it back to the mysterious source of its volcanic agency. For thousands of years no flames or light have been perceived on the summit of the Piton, nevertheless enormous lateral eruptions, the last of which took place in 1798, are proofs of the

activity of a fire still far from being extinguished. There is also something that leaves a melancholy impression on beholding a crater in the centre of a fertile and well-cultivated country. The history of the globe tells us that volcanoes destroy what they have been a long series of ages in creating. Islands which the action of submarine fires has raised above the water, are by degrees clothed in rich and smiling verdure; but these new lands are often laid waste by the renewed action of the same power which caused them to emerge from the bottom of the ocean. Islets, which are now but heaps of scoriæ and volcanic ashes, were once perhaps as fertile as the hills of Tacoronte and Sauzal. Happy the country where man has no distrust of the soil on which he lives."

Low on the shore lies the little seaport town of Orotava, known as the Puerto to distinguish it from the older and more important Villa Orotava lying some three miles away inland, at a higher altitude. Further along the coast is San Juan de la Rambla, and on the lower slopes of the opposite wall of the valley are the picturesque villages of Realejo Alto and Bajo, while Icod el Alto is perched at the very edge of the dark cliffs of the Tigaia at a height of about 1700 ft. A gap in the further mountain

range is known as the Portillo, the Fortaleza rises above this "gateway," and from this point begins the long gradual sweep of the Tigaia, which, from the valley, hides all but the very cone of the Peak. Above Villa Orotava towers Pedro Gil and the Montaña Blanca, with the sun glittering on its freshly fallen snow, and near at hand are the villages of Sauzal, Santa Ursula, Matanza and La Victoria.

Though Humboldt describes them as "smiling hamlets," he comments on their names which he says are "mingled together in all the Spanish colonies, and they form an unpleasing contract with the peaceful and tranquil feelings which these countries inspire.

"Matanza signifies slaughter, or carnage, and the word alone recalls the price at which victory has been purchased. In the New World it generally indicates the defeat of the natives; at Teneriffe the village Matanza was built in a place where the Spaniards were conquered by those same Guanches who soon after were sold as slaves in the markets of Europe."

In early winter the terraced ridges, which are cultivated with wheat and potatoes, are a blot in the landscape, brown and bare, but in spring, after

the winter rains, these slopes will be transformed into sheets of emerald green, and it is then that the valley looks its best. For a few days, all too few, the almond trees are smothered with their delicate pale pink blooms, but one night's rain or a few hours' rough wind will scatter all their blossoms, and nothing will remain of their rosy loveliness but a carpet of bruised and fallen petals.

The valley soon reveals traces of the upheavals of Nature in a bygone age; broad streams of lava, which at some time poured down the valley, remain grey and desolate-looking, almost devoid of vegetation, and the two cinder heaps or *fumaroles* resembling huge blackened mole-hills, though not entirely bare, cannot be admired. No one seems to know their exact history or age, but it appears pretty certain that they developed perfectly independently of any eruption of the Peak itself, though perhaps not "growing in a single night," as I was once solemnly assured they had done. One theory, which sounded not improbable, was that the bed of lava on which several English villas, the church and the Grand Hotel have been built, was originally spouted out of one of these cinder heaps, and the hill on which the hotel stands was in former

A STREET IN PUERTO OROTAVA

days the edge of the cliff. The lava is supposed to have flowed over the edge and accumulated to such a depth in the sea below that it formed the plateau of low-lying ground on which the Puerto now stands.

The little town is not without attraction, though its streets are dusty and unswept, being only cleaned once a year, in honour of the Feast of Corpus Christi, on which day at the Villa carpets of elaborate design, arranged out of the petals of flowers, run down the centre of the streets where the processions are to pass. My first impression of the town was that it appeared to be a deserted city, hardly a foot passenger was to be seen, and my own donkey was the only beast of burden in the main street of the town. Gorgeous masses of bougainvillea tumbled over garden walls, and glimpses were to be seen through open doorways of creeper-clad *patios*. The carved balconies with their little tiled roofs are inseparable from all the old houses, more or less decorated according to the importance of the house. The soft green of the woodwork of the houses, and more especially of the solid green shutters or *postijos*, behind which the inhabitants seem to spend many hours gazing into the streets, was always a source of admiration to

me. The main street ends with the mole, and looking seawards the surf appears to dash up into the street itself. The town wakes to life when a cargo steamer comes into the port, and then one long stream of carts, drawn by the finest oxen I have ever seen, finds its way to the mole, to unload the crates of bananas which are frequently sold on the quay itself to the contractors.

II

TENERIFFE (*continued*)

About a thousand feet above the Puerto de Orotava, on the long gradual slope which sweeps down from Pedro Gil forming the valley of Orotava, lies the *villa* or town of Orotava. This most picturesque old town is of far more interest than the somewhat squalid port, being the home of many old Spanish families, whose beautiful houses are the best examples of Spanish architecture in the Canaries. Besides their quiet *patios*, which are shady and cool even on the hottest summer days, the exterior of many of the houses is most beautiful. The admirable work of the carved balconies and shutters, the iron-work and carved stone-work cannot fail to make every one admire houses which are rapidly becoming unique. The Spaniards have, alas ! like many other nations, lost their taste in architecture, and the modern houses which are springing up all too quickly make one

shudder to contemplate. Some had been built to replace those which had been burnt, others were merely being built by men who had made a fortune in the banana trade. Not satisfied with their old solid houses, with their fine old stone doorways and overhanging wooden balconies, they are ruthlessly destroying them to build a fearsome modern monstrosity, possibly more comfortable to live in, but most offending to the eye. The love of their gardens seems also to be dying out, and as I once heard some one impatiently exclaim, "They have no soul above bananas," and it is true that the culture of bananas is at the moment of all-absorbing interest.

Though the *patios* of the houses may be decked with plants, the air being kept cool and moist by the spray of a tinkling fountain, many of the little gardens at the back of these old family mansions have fallen into a sad state of disorder and decay. The myrtle and box-hedges, formerly the pride of their owners, are no longer kept trim and shorn, and the little beds are no longer full of flowers. One garden remains to show how, when even slightly tended, flowers grow and flourish in the cooler air of the Villa. In former days a giant

THE PEAK, FROM VILLA OROTAVA

The Peak, from OKOTAVA, TENERIFE

chestnut tree was the pride of this garden, only its venerable trunk now remains to tell of its departed glories; but the *poyos* (double walls) are full of flowers all the year, and the native *Pico de paloma* (*Lotus Berthelotii*) flourishes better here than in any other garden; it drapes the walls and half smothers the steps and stone seats with its garlands of soft grey-green, and in spring is covered with its deep red "pigeons' beaks." The walls are gay with stocks, carnations, verbenas, lilies, geraniums, and hosts of plants. Long hedges of *Libonia floribunda*, the *bandera d'España* of the natives, as its red and yellow blossoms represent the national colours of Spain, line the entrance, and in unconsidered damp corners white arum lilies grow, the rather despised *orejas de burros*, or donkeys' ears, of the country people, who give rather apt nick-names to not only flowers, but people.

Though the higher-class Spaniards are a most exclusive race, I met with nothing but civility from their hands when asking permission to see their *patio* or gardens; as much cannot be said for the middle and lower classes of to-day, who are distinctly anti-foreign. The lower classes appear to regard an incessant stream of pennies as their

right, and hurl abuse or stones at your head when their persistent begging is ignored, and even tradesmen are often insolent to foreigners. A spirit of independence and republicanism is very apparent. An employer of labour can obviously keep no control over his men, who work when they choose, or more often don't work when they don't choose, and the mother or father of a family keeps no control over the children. One day I asked our gardener why he did not send his children to school to learn to read and write, as he was deploring that he could not read the names of the seeds he was sowing. I thought it was a good moment to point a moral, but he shrugged his shoulders, and said they did not care to go, and also they had no shoes and could not go to school barefoot. The man was living rent free, earning the same wages as an average English labourer, and two sons in work contributed to the expenses of the house, besides the money he got for the crop on a small piece of land which the whole family cultivated on Sundays, and still he could not afford to provide shoes in order that his children should learn to read and write. Another man announced with pride that one of his children

attended school. Knowing he had two, I inquired, "Why only one?" On which he owned that the other one used to go, but now she refused to do so, and neither he nor his wife could make her go. This independent person was aged nine!

One of the great curiosities of the Villa was the great Dragon Tree, and though it stands no more, visitors are still shown the site where it once stood and are told of its immense age. Humboldt gave the age of the tree at the time of his visit as being at least 6000 years, and though this may have been excessive, there is no doubt that it was of extreme age. It was blown down and the remains accidentally destroyed by fire in 1867, and only old engravings remain to tell of its wondrous size. The hollow trunk was large enough for a good sized room or cave, and in the days of the Guanches, when a national assembly was summoned to create a new chief or lord, the meeting place was at the great Dragon Tree. The land on which it stood was afterwards enclosed and became the garden of the Marques de Sauzal.

The ceremony of initiating a lord was a curious one, and the Overlord of Taoro (the old name of

Orotava), was the greatest of these lords, having 6000 warriors at his command. Though the dignity was inherited, it was not necessary that it should pass from father to son, and more frequently passed from brother to brother. "When they raised one to be lord they had this custom. Each lordship had a bone of the most ancient lord in their lineage wrapped in skins and guarded. The most ancient councillors were convoked to the 'Tagoror,' or place of assembly. After his election the king was given this bone to kiss. After having kissed it he put it over his head. Then the rest of the principal people put it over his shoulder, and he said, '*Agoñe yacoron yñatzahaña Chacoñamet*' (I swear by the bone on this day on which you have made me great). This was the ceremony of the coronation, and on the same day the people were called that they might know whom they had for their lord. He feasted them, and there were general banquets at the cost of the new lord and his relations. Great pomp appears to have surrounded these lords, and any one meeting them in the road when they progressed to change their summer residence in the mountains to one by the sea in winter, was expected to prostrate himself on the

ground, and on rising to cleanse the king's feet with the edge of his coat of skins." (See "The Guanches of Teneriffe," by Sir Clement Markham.) After the conquest the Spaniards turned the temple of the Guanches into a chapel, and Mass was said within the tree.

In the Villa are several fine old churches, whose spires and domes are her fairest adornment. The principal church is the Iglesia de la Concepcion, whose domes dominate the whole town. The exterior of the church is very fine, though the interior is not so interesting. It is curious to think how the silver communion plate, said to have belonged to St. Paul's Cathedral in London, can have come into the possession of this church. The theory that this and similar plate in the Cathedral at Las Palmas are the scattered remains of the magnificent church plate which was sold and dispersed by the order of Oliver Cromwell is generally accepted.

The fine old doorway and tower of the Convent and Church of Santo Domingo date from a time when the Spaniards had more soul for the beautiful than they have at the present time.

The narrow steep cobbled streets are hardly any

of them without interest, and the old balconies, the carved shutters and glimpses of flowery *patios*, with a gorgeous mass of creeper tumbling over a garden wall or wreathing an old doorway, combine to make it a most picturesque town. A feature of almost every Spanish house is the little latticed hutch which covers the drip stone filter. In many an old house creepers and ferns, revelling in the dampness which exudes from the constantly wet stone, almost cover the little house, and even the stone itself grows maiden-hair or other ferns, and their presence is not regarded as interfering with the purifying properties of the stone, in which the natives place great faith. I never could believe that clean water could in any way benefit by being passed through the dirt of ages which must accumulate in these stones, there being no means of cleaning them except on the surface. The red earthenware water-pots of decidedly classical shape are made in every size, and a tiny child may be seen learning to carry a diminutive one on her head with a somewhat uncertain gait which she will soon outgrow, and in a year or two will stride along carrying a large water-pot all unconscious of her load, leaving her two hands free to carry another burden.

SAN DOMINGO, VILLA OROTAVA

A charming walk or donkey-ride leads from the Villa along fairly level country to Realejo Alto, passing through the two little villages of La Perdoma and La Cruz Santa. In early spring the almond blossom gives a rosy tinge to many a stretch of rough uncultivated ground, and in the villages over the garden walls was wafted the heavy scent of orange blossoms. The trees at this altitude seemed freer of the deadly black blight which has ravaged all the orange groves on the lower land, and altogether the vegetation struck one as being more luxuriant and more forward. The cottage-garden walls were gay with flowers: stocks, mauve and white, the favourite *alelis* of the natives, long trails of geraniums and wreaths of *Pico de paloma*, pinks and carnations and hosts of other flowers I noticed as we rode past.

The village of Realejo Alto is, without doubt, the most picturesque village I ever saw in the Canaries. Its situation on a very steep slope with the houses seemingly piled one above the other is very suggestive of an Italian mountain village. Part of the Church of San Santiago, the portion next the tower, is supposed to be the oldest church in the island, and the spire, the most prominent

feature of the village and neighbourhood, is worthy of the rest of the old church. The interior of the church is not without interest when seen in a good light, and a fine old doorway is said to be the work of Spanish workmen shortly after the conquest. The carved stone-work round this doorway and a very similar one in the lower village are unique specimens of this style of work in the islands.

The *barranco* which separates the upper and lower villages of Realejo was the scene of a great flood in 1820 which severely damaged both villages. Realejo Bajo, though not quite as picturesque as the upper village, is well worth a visit, and its inhabitants are justly proud of their Dragon Tree, a rival to the one at Icod which may possibly some day become as celebrated as the great tree at Orotava.

These two villages are great centres of the *calado* or drawn-thread-work industry. Through every open doorway may be seen women and girls bending over the frames on which the work is stretched. It is mostly of very inferior quality, very coarsely worked and on poor material, and it seems a pity that there is no supply of better

and finer work. Visitors get tired of the sight of the endless stacks of bed-covers and tea-cloths which are offered to them, and certainly the work compares badly both in price and quality with that done in the East.

III

TENERIFFE (*continued*)

A SPELL of clear weather, late in February, made us decide to make an expedition to the Cañadas, which, except to those who are bent on mountain climbing and always wish to get to the very top of every height they see, appeals to the ordinary traveller more than ascending the Peak itself. In spite of the promise of fine weather the day before, the morning broke cloudy and at dawn, 6 A.M., we started full of doubts and misgivings as to what the sunrise would bring. We had decided to drive as far as the road would allow, as we had been warned that we should find nine or ten hours' mule-riding would be more than enough, in fact, our friends were rather Job's comforters. Some said the expedition was so tiring that they had known people to be ill for a week after undertaking it. Others said it was never clear at the top, we must be prepared to be soaked to the skin in the mist,

for the mules to stumble and probably roll head over heels, in fact that strings of disasters were certain to overtake us. Our mules were to join us at Realejo Alto, about an hour's drive from the port, and there we determined we would decide whether we would continue, or content ourselves with a shorter expedition on a lower level.

Sunrise did not improve the prospect, a heavy bank of clouds lay over Pedro Gil, while ominous drifts of light white clouds were gathering below the Tigaia, and the prospect out to sea was not more encouraging. The mules were late, in true Spanish fashion, and we consulted a few weather-wise looking inhabitants who gathered round our carriage in the Plaza, shivering in the morning air, with their *mantas* or blanket cloaks wrapped closely round them. They looked pityingly at these mad foreigners who had left their beds at such an hour when they were not forced to—for the Spaniard is no early riser—and were proposing to ride up into the clouds. The optimistic members of the party said: "It is nothing but a little morning mist," while the pessimist remarked, "Morning mists make mid-day clouds in my experience."

The arrival of the mules put an end to further

discussion. The muleteers were full of hope and confident that the clouds would disperse, or anyway that we should get above the region of cloud and find clear weather at the top, so though our old blanket-coated friend murmured "*Pobrecitas*" (poor things) below his breath, we made a start armed with wraps for the wet and cold we were to encounter. The clattering of the mules as we rode up the steep village street brought many heads to the windows; the little green shutters, or *postijos*, were hastily pushed open to enable the crowd, which appeared to inhabit every house, to catch a sight of the "*Inglezes.*" Inquiry as to where we were bound for, I noticed, generally brought an exclamation of "Very bad weather" ("*Tiempo muy malo*"), to the great indignation of our men, who muttered, "Don't say so!"

The stony path from Realejo leads in a fairly steep ascent to Palo Blanco, a little scattered village of charcoal-burners' huts at a height of 2200 feet. The wreaths of blue smoke from their fires mingled with the mist, but already there was a promise of better things to come, as the sun was breaking through and the clouds were thinner. The chant of the charcoal-burners is a sound one

REALEJO ALTO

'RETAMAR ALTO, TENERIFE

gets accustomed to in these regions, and I never quite knew whether it was merely a song which cheered them on their downward path, or whether it was to announce their approach and ask ascending travellers to move out of their way, as the size of the loads they carry on their heads makes them often very difficult to pass. Presently two swalwart girls came into sight, swinging along at a steady trot; their bare feet apparently even more at home along the stony track than the unshod feet of the mules, as there is no stopping to pick their way, on they go, only too anxious to reach their journey's end, and drop the crushing load off their heads. We anxiously inquired as to the state of the weather higher up, and to our great relief, with no hesitation, came the answer: "*Muy claro*" (very clear), and in a few minutes a puff of wind blew all the mist away as if by magic, and there was a shout of triumph from the men.

Below lay the whole valley of Orotava, and we were leaving the picturesque town of the Villa Orotava far away below us on the left. The little villages of La Perdoma, La Cruz Santa, and the two Realejos, Alto and Bajo, were more immediately below us, and far away in the distance

beyond the Puerto were to be seen Santa Ursula, Sauzal and the little scattered town of Tacoronte. Pedro Gil and all the range of mountains on the left had large stretches of melting snow, shining with a dazzling whiteness in the sun. It had been an unusual winter for snow, so we were assured, and it was rare to find it still lying at the end of February, but we were glad it was so, for it certainly added greatly to the beauty of the scene. At the Monte Verde, the region of green things, we called a halt, for the sake of man and beast, and while our men refreshed themselves with substantial slices of sour bread and the snow white local cheese, made from goats' milk, and our mules enjoyed a few minutes' breathing-space with loosened girths, we took a short walk to look down into the beautiful Barranco de la Laura. Here the trees have as yet escaped destruction at the hands of the charcoal-burners and the steep banks are still clad with various kinds of native laurel mixed with large bushes of the *Erica arborea*, the heath which covers all the region of the Monte Verde. The almost complete deforestation by the charcoal-burners is most deeply to be deplored, and it is sad to think how far more beautiful all this region

must have been before it was stripped of its grand pine and laurel trees. The authorities took no steps to stop this wholesale destruction of the forests until it was too late, and even now, though futile regulations exist, no one takes the trouble to see that they are enforced. The law now only allows dead wood to be collected, but it is easy enough to *make* dead wood—a man goes up and breaks down branches of trees or *retama*, and a few weeks later goes round and collects them as dead wood, and so the law is evaded. As there is a never-ending demand for charcoal, it being the only fuel the Spaniard uses, so matters will continue until there is nothing left to cut.

No doubt we were on the same path as that by which Humboldt had travelled when he visited Teneriffe in 1799 and ascended the Peak. His description of the vegetation shows how the ruthless axe of the charcoal-burners has destroyed some of the most beautiful forests in the world. Humboldt had been obliged to abandon his travels in Italy in 1795 without visiting the volcanic districts of Naples and Sicily, a knowledge of which was indispensable for his geological studies. Four years later the Spanish Court had given him a splendid welcome

and placed at his disposal the frigate *Pizarro* for his voyage to the equinoctial regions of New Spain. After a narrow escape of falling into the hands of English privateers the Trade winds blew him to the Canaries. The 21st day of June, 1799, finds him on his way to the summit of the Peak accompanied by his friend Bonpland, M. le Gros, the secretary of the French Consulate in Santa Cruz, and the English gardener of Durasno (the botanical gardens of Orotava). The day appears not to have been happily chosen. The top of the Peak was covered in thick clouds from sunrise up to ten o'clock. Only one path leads from Villa Orotava through the *retama* plains and the *mal pays*. "This is the way that all visitors must follow who are only a short time in Teneriffe. When people go up the Peak" (these are Humboldt's words) "it is the same as when the Chamounix or Etna are visited, people must follow the guides and one only succeeds in seeing what other travellers have seen and described." Like others he was much struck by the contrast of the vegetation in these parts of Teneriffe and in that surrounding Santa Cruz, where he had landed. "A narrow stony path leads through Chestnut woods to regions full of Laurel

and Heath, and then further to the Dornajito springs; this being the only fountain that is met with all the way to the Peak. We stopped to take our provision of water under a solitary fir tree. This station is known in the country by the name of Pino del Dornajito. Above this region of arborescent heaths called Monte Verde, is the region of ferns. Nowhere in the temperate zones have I seen such an abundance of the *Pteris*, *Blechium* and *Asplenium;* yet none of these plants have the stateliness of the arborescent ferns which, at the height of 500 and 600 *toises*, form the principal ornaments of equinoctial America. The root of the *Pteris aquilina* serves the inhabitants of Palma and Gomera for food. They grind it to powder, and mix it with a quantity of barley meal. This composition when boiled is called *gofio;* the use of so homely an aliment is proof of the extreme poverty of the lower classes of people in the Canary Islands. (Gofio is still largely consumed).

"The region of ferns is succeeded by a wood of juniper trees and firs, which has suffered greatly from the violence of hurricanes (not one is now left). In this place, mentioned by some travellers under the name of Caraveles, Mr. Eden states that

in the year 1705, he saw little flames, which according to the doctrines of the naturalists of his time, he attributes to sulphurous exhalations igniting spontaneously. We continued to ascend, till we came to the rock of La Gayta and to the Portillo: traversing this narrow pass between two basaltic hills, we entered the great plain of *Spartium*. . . . We spent two hours in crossing the Llano del Retama, which appears like an immense sea of white sand. In the midst of the plain are tufts of the *retama*, which is the *Spartium nubigenum* of Aiton. M. de Martinière wished to introduce this beautiful shrub into Languedoc, where firewood is very scarce. It grows to a height of 9 ft. and is loaded with odoriferous flowers, with which the goat-hunters who met in our road had decorated their hats. The goats of the Peak, which are of a dark brown colour, are reckoned delicious food; they browse on the *spartium* and have run wild in the deserts from time immemorial." Spending the night on the mountain, though in mid summer, the travellers complained bitterly of the cold, having neither tents nor rugs. At 3 A.M. they started by torch-light to make the final ascent to the summit of the

Piton. "A strong northerly wind chased the clouds, the moon at intervals shooting through the vapours exposed its disk on a firmament of the darkest blues, and the view of the volcano threw a majestic character over the nocturnal scenery.

"Sometimes the peak was entirely hidden form our eyes by the fog, at other times it broke upon us in terrific proximity: and like an enormous pyramid, threw its shadow over the clouds rolling at our feet."

Scaling the mountain on the north-eastern side, in two hours the party reached Alta Vista, following the same course as travellers of to-day, passing over the *mal pays* (a region devoid of vegetable mould and covered with fragments of lava) and visiting the ice caves. After the Laurels follow ferns of great size, Junipers and Pines (not one is now left of either) all the way up to the Portillo.

The Portillo was still towering far above us, the gateway of the range, as its name implies, through which we had to pass to get to the Cañadas, and the stony path, though a well defined one, meanders on, not at a very steep incline, past rough hillocks where here and there pumice stone

appears. Gradually the heath, which was just coming into flower, and in a few weeks would be covered with its rather insignificant little white or pinkish blossoms, becomes interspersed with *codeso*, *Adenocarpus viscosus*, with its peculiar flat spreading growth and tiny leaves of a soft bluish-green. During all the long ascent there is no sign of the Peak; the path lies so immediately beneath the dividing range that it is not until the Portillo itself is reached, that it suddenly bursts into view. It is a grand scene which lies before one. The foreground of rocky ground is interspersed with great bushes of *retama* (*Sparto-cytisus nubigens*), a species of broom said to be peculiar to this district. In growth it somewhat resembles *Spartium junceum*, commonly known in England as Spanish broom, but is more stubby and perhaps not so graceful. When in flower in May its sweet scent is so powerful that not only does it fill the whole air in this mountain district, but sailors are said to smell it miles out at sea. Our guides told us some bushes had white flowers and others white tinged with rose colour. At this season large patches of thawing snow take the place of flowers, but the bushes of *retama* can be seen piercing the Peak's

dense mantle of snow up to a height of quite 10,000 feet.

I had been told that all the beauty of the Peak was lost when seen from so near, that the beautiful pyramid of rock and snow which rises some 12,000 feet and stands towering above the valley of Orotava would look like a mere hill when seen rising from the moat of fine sand, which is what the Cañadas most resemble, that in fact, all enchantment would be gone. One writer even has gone so far as to call the Peak an ugly cinder-heap when seen from the Cañadas on the other side, and to say they found themselves "in a lifeless, soundless world, burnt out, dead, the very abomination of desolation, where once raged a fiery inferno over a lake of boiling lava." I cannot help thinking that the writer of the above must have been travelling under adverse circumstances; it is curious how being overtired, wet and cold will make one find no beauty in a scene, which others, who like ourselves have seen it in glorious sunshine, will describe as one of the most beautiful sights in the world.

The path just beyond the Portillo (7150 ft.) divides, and those who propose to ascend the Peak follow the track up the side of the Montaña Blanca, a

snow-clad hump at the east base of the Peak. The cone itself is locally called Lomo Tiezo, and rises at an angle of 28°. The stone hut at the Alta Vista (10,702 ft.) is where many a weary traveller spends the night, before ascending the final 1400 ft. on foot, as the mules are left at the hut. No doubt in clear weather the traveller is well repaid, and the scene is well described as follows by Mr. Samler Brown: "Those who cannot ascend the mountain would probably greatly help their imagination by looking at a lunar crater through a telescope. The surroundings are the essence of desolation and ruin. On one side the rounded summit of the Montaña Blanca, on the other the threatening craters of the Pico Viejo and of Chahorra, the latter three-quarters of a mile in diameter, 10,500 ft. high, once a boiling cauldron and even now ready to burst into furious life at any moment. Below, the once circular basin of the Cañadas, seamed with streams of lava and surrounded by its jagged and many-coloured walls. Around, a number of volcanoes, standing, as Piazzi Smyth says, like fish on their tails with widely gaping mouths. On the upper slopes the pine forests and far beneath the sea, with the Six Satellites (the islands of La Palma,

ENTRANCE TO A SPANISH VILLA

Gomera, Hierro, Grand Canary, Fuerteventura and Lanzarote) floating in the distance, the enormous horizon giving the impression that the looker-on is in a sort of well rather than on a height which, taken in relation to its surroundings is second to none in the world."

To attain the rude little shrine at the Fortaleza where a rest was to be taken, the path leads down into the Cañadas itself. A stretch of fine yellow sand, like the sand of the Sahara, thoroughly sun-baked, proved too great a temptation to one of the mules, and regardless of its rider and luncheon-basket, it enjoyed a good roll in the soft warm bed —luckily with no untoward results. After a welcome rest in the grateful shade of a *retama* bush, we turned our backs to the Peak and left this beautiful solitary scene. The island of La Palma seemed to be floating in the sky; the line of the horizon dividing sea and sky appeared to be all out of place, in fact it seems to be a weird uncanny world in these parts, and though to-day the Peak may be standing calm and serene, bathed in sunshine and clad in snow, still it reminds one of the death and destruction it has caused by fire and flood, and who knows when it may some day awake

from its long sleep and shake the whole island to its foundations.

It is an accepted theory that the Cañadas themselves were originally an immense crater, the second largest in the world, and during a period of activity they threw up the Peak which became the new crater. Probably during this process the Cañadas themselves subsided, and left the wall of rock which appears to form a perfect protection to the Valley of Orotava in case the Peak should some day again spout forth burning lava.

It was in the early winter of 1909 that the inhabitants of Teneriffe were reminded that their volcano was not dead. For nearly a year previously frequent slight shocks of earthquake had warned geological experts that some upheaval was to be expected, which in November were followed by loud detonations, each one shaking the houses in Orotava. One of the inhabitants has described the sensation as one of curious instability, that the houses felt as though they were built on a foundation of jelly. An entirely new crater opened twenty miles from the Peak, and though so far distant from Orotava, the flashes of light were distinctly visible above the lower mountains on the south

side of the Peak. Very little damage seems to have been done, as luckily there were no villages near enough to be annihilated by the streams of lava, but most exaggerated reports of the eruptions were circulated in Europe, and it is even said that a message was sent to the Spanish Government asking for men-of-war to be sent at once to take away the inhabitants as the island was sinking into the sea! Many geological authorities have given it as their opinion that it is most unlikely that there will be another eruption in less than another hundred years, which is consoling and reassuring.

As the paths were dry we were able to return by a different route, which though rather longer is far more beautiful, and to those who prefer walking to riding downhill is highly to be recommended. The mules appear to be more sure-footed in the stony paths and once the region of the Monte Verde begins again and the path is smooth their unshod feet get no hold, and in wet weather the path is a mere "mud slide" and should not be attempted. It was a beautiful walk along the crest of the range; the Peak was lost to sight but the valley below lay filled with drifting patches of light mist, through which could just be seen the

Villa bathed in the afternoon light, and above, all was clear. Pedro Gil, and the Montaña Blanca beyond, glowed in a red light, and right away in the distance the mountains round La Laguna were just visible.

From La Corona the view is perhaps at its best. On the left the pine woods above Icod de los Vinos stretch away into the distance to the extreme west of the island, and on the right the valley of Orotava lies spread out like a map. Just below La Corona one gets back into cultivated regions and the sight of a country-woman with the usual burden on her head reminded us how many hours it was since we had seen a sign of life—not, indeed, since we had passed the two charcoal-burners in the early morning who had given such welcome news of clear weather ahead. Icod el Alto, with the roughest village street it has ever been my fate to encounter, was soon left behind, and the mules trudged wearily down as steep a path as we had met with anywhere, to Realejo Bajo and back to civilisation and the prosaic. A rickety little victoria with three lean but gallant little horses took us home exactly twelve hours from the time we started. We had not meant to break records, and on

the homeward path had certainly taken things easily—the ride from Realejo Alto to the Cañadas was exactly four hours, one hour's rest, five hours' ride down, partly walking, and two hours' driving—and we were neither wet through nor so tired that we were ill for a week. I had heard a good description of mule riding by some one who was consulted as to whether it was very tiring, and his answer was, "It is not *riding*, you just sit, and leave the rest to the mule and Providence!"

IV

TENERIFFE (*continued*)

I KNOW nothing more enjoyable than a ramble along the coast or up one of the many *barrancos* in the neighbourhood of Orotava. I had always heard that the Canary Islands were rich in native plants, but I hardly realised that almost each separate *barranco* (literally meaning a mountain torrent, but now applied to any ravine or deep gully) would have its own special treasures, and that the cliffs by the sea are so rich in vegetation that in many places they look like the most perfect examples of rock gardens.

One of the best walks is up the steep little path, hardly more than a goats' track, which leads from the Barranco Martinez to the cliffs below the terrace of La Paz. It is possible to wander for miles in this direction; occasionally, it is true, the spell of enchantment in the way of plant collecting will be broken by the path suddenly coming to

PUERTO OROTAVA

PUERTO OROTAVA, TENERIFE Iceland

vast stretches of banana cultivation, but luckily there is still a good deal of unbroken ground, and the path leads back again to the verge of the cliffs and inaccessible places. There are so many plants that will be strangers to the newcomer that it is hard to know which to mention and which to leave out, as far be it from me to pretend to give a full list of Canary plants, and the longer I stayed in the islands the less surprised I was to hear that a learned botanist had been four years collecting material for a full and complete account of the flora of the Canaries, and that still his work was not completed. I think the first place must be given to *Euphorbia canariensis* as one of the most conspicuous and ornamental of the cliff plants. Great clumps of this "candelabra plant," as the English have christened it (or *cardon* in Spanish), are so characteristic that it will always be associated in my mind with the cliffs of Teneriffe. Its great square fluted columns may rise to 10 or 12 ft. leafless, but bearing near the top a reddish fruit or flower, and having vicious-looking hooks down the edges of its stout branches. If you gash one of the columns with a knife out spurts its sticky, milky juice, which if not really poisonous is

a strong irritant, and there is a legend that the Guanches used it to stupefy fish, but precisely in what manner I never ascertained. One feature of the cliff vegetation cannot fail to strike every one, and that is the soft bluish-green of nearly all the plants. The prickly pears, as both the Cactuses are commonly called, *Opuntia Dillenii* and *Opuntia coccinellifera*—the latter especially appears to have been introduced for the cultivation of cochineal, and has remained as a weed—the sow thistles (*Sonchus*), *Kleinias*, *Artemerias*, and nearly all the succulent plants have grey-green colouring, which is in such beautiful contrast to the dark cliffs. The overhanging cliffs just below La Paz are of most beautiful formation and colouring, in places a deep brick red colour, owing to a deposit of yellow ochre, and in others a tawny yellow, and so deep are the hollows in the volcanic rocks and the air chambers exposed by the inroads of the sea that they have been made into dwellings. Apparently more than one family and all their goods and chattels are ensconced in the recesses of the rocks, and here they live a real open air life, free from house tax or any burden in the way of repairs to their dwellings. The best of water-supplies is close at hand, indeed

the stream which gushes out of the rock provides drinking water for the whole town, and when I was told that one of these cave-dwellers was a harmless lunatic, I thought there was a good deal of method in his madness when I remembered the vile-smelling, stuffy cottages that most of the poor inhabit.

Senecio Kleinia, or *Kleinia neriifolia*, has the habit of a miniature dragon tree, its gouty-forked branches having tufts of blue-green leaves. It remains a shrubby plant about 5 ft. high, and *Plocama pendula*, with its light weeping form and lovely green colour, makes a charming contrast to the stiff growth of the Euphorbias and Kleinias, and all three are so thoroughly typical of the cliff vegetation that they will probably be the first to attract the attention of the newcomer. *Artemesia canariensis* (Canary wormwood) is easily recognised by its whitish leaf and very strong aromatic scent, which is far from pleasant when crushed. The native Lavender and various Chrysanthemums, the parents probably of the so-called "Paris Daisy" in cultivation, are common weeds, but in March and April, the months of wild flowers, many more interesting treasures may be found, and while sitting on the rocks, within reach

of one's hand a bunch of flowers or low-growing shrubs may be collected, all probably new to a traveller from northern climes. On the shady damp side of many a miniature *barranco* or crevasse will be seen nestling in the shadow of the rocks which protect them from the salt spray, broad patches of the wild *Cineraria tussilaginis*, in every shade of soft lilac, prettier by far than any of the cultivated hybrids. In one inaccessible spot they were interspersed with a yellow Ranunculus, and close by was one of the many sow-thistles with its showy yellow flowers. On some of the steep slopes, too steep happily for the cultivation of the everlasting banana, the great flower stems of the *Agave rigida* rear their proud heads twenty feet in the air, and are the remains of a plantation of these agaves, which was originally made with a view to cultivating them in order to extract fibre from their leaves. This variety is the true *Sisal* from the Bahamas, botanically known as var. *sisalana*, and the rapidity with which it increases once the plants are old enough to bloom may be imagined when it is said that from one single flower-spike will drop 2000 new plants. Like many other agricultural experiments in this island, fibre extrac-

tion was abandoned, but I heard of some attempt being made to revive it in the arid island of Lanzarote. Among the beautiful strata of rock, besides the Euphorbias and prickly pears, are to be found many low-growing spreading bushes of the succulent, *Salsola oppositæfolia*, *Ruba fruticosa*, a white-flowering little *Micromeria*, *Spergularia fimbriata*, whose bright mauve flowers would be considered a most valuable addition to a so-called "rock garden" in England, and the low-growing violet-blue *Echium violaceum*, which is a dreaded weed in Australia, where the seed was probably accidentally introduced. I often used to think when rambling over this natural rock garden what lessons might be learnt by studying rock formation before attempting to lay out in England one of those feeble imitations of Nature which usually result in lamentable failure, not only in failure to please the eye, but failure to cultivate the plants through not providing them with suitable positions.

Those who have a steady head and do not mind scrambling down steep narrow paths can get right down on to the rugged rocks, and when a high sea is running the spray dashes high on to the cliffs, and

one sits in a haze of white mist wondering how any vegetation can stand the salt spray. The small lilac *Statice pectinata* grew and flourished in such surroundings, reminding one that in England statices are generally called Sea Lavenders because the native English Statice, *S. Limonium*, grows on marsh land. The miniature-flowered heath-like *Frankenia ericifolia* was also at home amid the spray.

As the path in our wanderings frequently led us back among large farms or *fincas* entirely devoted to the cultivation of bananas, it may be of interest to mention something of the history of this most lucrative industry. It used to go to my heart to see charming pieces of broken ground being ruthlessly stripped of their natural vegetation, old gnarled and twisted fig trees cut down, and an army of men set to work to break up the soil ready for planting. In most cases the top soil is removed, and the soft earth-stone underneath is broken up and the top soil replaced; but the system appears to differ according to the nature of the soil. Walls are constructed for the protection of the plants, or in order to terrace the land and get the level necessary for the system of irrigation

concrete channels being made for the water. So the initial outlay of bringing land into cultivation is heavy, but then the reward reaped is almost beyond the dreams of avarice. Good land with water is now fetching over £40 an acre per annum—indeed, I have even heard of as high a price as £60 having been obtained; that, even if true, is exceptional; but perhaps nowhere else in the world is land let for agricultural purposes at such a rate. Land, however good, which is not irrigated, will only fetch from £4 to £6 an acre, and though I was never able to ascertain exactly how much per acre the water would cost, there is no doubt the rate is a very high one; so the rent is not all profit to the landlord. The life of a banana plantation averages from twelve to fourteen years, but for eighteen months no return is obtained, except from the potato crop which is planted in between the young plants, or, rather, the old stumps, from which a young sucker will spring up and bear fruit. That shoot will again be cut down, and by that time several suckers will spring up, about three being left as a rule on a plant, which will each bear fruit in nine or ten months. An acre of land in full bearing will produce over 2000 bunches, which

are at present fetching about 4*s.* each when packed for export.

Much of the labour on the plantations is done by women, and long processions of them make their way to the packing-houses, bearing the immense bunches of green fruit on their heads. Bare-footed, sturdy, handsome girls many of them, with curiously deep voices in which they chant with a sing-song note as they trip along with a splendid upright carriage. Unfortunately their song is instantly broken when they catch sight of a foreigner, and a chorus of *Peni, peni, peni,* either getting louder and louder if no attention is paid to the demand, or turned to a bleating whine for *una perrita* (a little penny), accompanied frequently by a volley of stones. Foreigners complain bitterly of this begging, but they have brought it on themselves by throwing coins to children as they drive along the road. Or when a crowd of urchins collects, as if to reward them for their bright black eyes and pretty faces, which many of them have, a shower of coppers is thrown to them, so it is small wonder that a race has grown up whose earliest instinct teaches it to beg, and I feel sure that *Peni* is often the first word that a toddling child is taught.

The packing-houses are also a blot on the landscape, sometimes great unsightly sheds tacked on to what has once been the summer residence of an old Spanish family, and here crowds of men, women and girls are wrapping up the bunches, which are shipped in wooden crates by the thousand, and tens or even hundreds of thousands, I should imagine, judging by the endless procession of carts drawn by immense bullocks which wend their way down to the mole, when a steamer comes in to take a whole cargo of the fruit to England. I used often to wonder that it was possible to find such an unlimited market for bananas when one thinks that Grand Canary ships as many as Teneriffe, and they have a formidable rival also in Jamaica. It is to be hoped that the trade will not be overdone and the markets fall, or that a blight will not come on the plants, and that the Islands will not again suffer from the ruin which followed the cochineal boom. Bananas are said to have been introduced to the Canaries from the Gulf of Guinea, but that was not their real home, and no one knows how they were originally brought from the Far East. From the Canaries they were sent to the West Indian Islands in 1516, and on from there to Central

America. Oviedo, writing about the natural history of the West Indies, mentions having seen bananas growing in the orchard of a monastery at Las Palmas in 1520. The botanical name of the Banana, *Musa sapientum*, was given in the old belief that it was the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The variety now under cultivation is *Musa Cavendishii*, the least tropical and most suitable for cool climates. Locally they are called *Plátano*, a corruption of the original name *Plántano*, from plantain in English, under which name they are always known in the East. Though the plant has been known in the islands for nearly four centuries, it was of no use as a crop before the water which is so absolutely necessary for its cultivation was brought down from the mountains. Some residents—those, I noticed, who did not own banana plantations—lament that the excessive irrigation has made the climate of Orotava damper than it used to be, but if the cultivation has brought about a climatic change, it has also brought about a financial change in the fortunes of the farmers and landlords, and many an enterprising man, who a few years ago was just a working *medianero*, satisfied with his potato or tomato crop, has

little by little built up a very substantial fortune.

A *medianero* is a tenant or bailiff who cultivates the ground and receives a share of the profits. The contract between the landlord and the *medianero* varies a good deal on different estates, and the system is rather complicated, but as a rule he provides his tenant with a house rent free, pays for half the seed of a cereal, potato or vegetable crop, but none of the labour for cultivation, and the profits made on the crop are equally divided. Sometimes, especially in the case of banana cultivation, the proprietor pays for half the labour of planting and gathering the crop for sending to market, but never for any of the intermediate labour. The landlord provides the all-important water-supply, but all the labour of irrigation has to be done by the *medianero*, who also pays a share of taxes. The loss of a crop through blight or a storm is equally shared. The trouble of the system, which in some ways seems a good one, must come in over the division of the profits, as either the honesty of the tenant must be implicitly trusted or an overseer must be present when the crop is gathered to see that the landlord gets his true *medias*.

At a higher altitude, some 800 or 900 ft. below the village of Santa Ursula, which is justly famous for its groups of Canary Palms, is a large estate, as yet uncultivated from lack of sufficient water. Besides the natural vegetation which stands the summer drought, the owner has collected together many drought-resisting plants, among which are several natives of Australia. The Golden Wattle seemed quite at home, though the trees have not yet attained the size they would in their native country, and small groves of *Eucalyptus Lehmanni*, with their curious fluffy balls of flower, gave welcome shade, and Australian salt bushes were being grown as an experiment with a view to providing a new fodder plant. The stony ground was covered with a low-growing *Cystus monspeliensis* closely resembling the variety much prized in England as *florentina*, its white blossoms covering the bushes. Many of the plants were the same as on the lower cliffs, but *Convolvulus scoparius* I was much interested to find growing in its natural state. The growth so closely resembles that of the *retama* that it might easily be mistaken for it; the natives call it *Leña Noel* or *Palo de rosa*, but the flower is like a miniature convolvulus growing all down

the stems. Both this and *Convolvulus floridus* are known as Canary Rosewoods, and *scoparius* has become rare owing to the digging of its roots from which the oil was distilled. Dr. Morris of Kew was a great admirer of *C. floridus*, and describes *guadil*, as it is known locally, as "a most attractive plant. When in flower it appears as if covered with newly fallen snow. It is one of the few native plants which awaken the enthusiasm of the local residents." Many Sempervivums were to be seen, but *S. Lindleyi* is most curious. Its fleshy transparent leaves grow in clusters and it has received the local and very apt name of Guanche grapes. Little *Scylla iridifolium* grew everywhere, and one could have spent days collecting treasures, and I felt torn in two between admiring the splendid views which the headland commands, and trying to add something to my most insufficient knowledge of the native plants. Near the house in cultivated ground were to be seen the two most ornamental native brooms, *Genista rhodorrhizoides* and *Cytisus filipes;* both are of drooping habit, with very sweet-scented white flowers, and should be more widely cultivated. The former very closely resembles the variety *mono-*

sperma, which grows near the Mediterranean coast.

Here too were to be seen some splendid clumps of the true native *Statice arborea* which for many years gave rise to such botanical discussions. For a long time this variety was lost and a hybrid of *arborea* and *macrophylla* did duty for the true variety, which was definitely pronounced extinct. It was, I believe, Francis Messon who first collected this plant in Teneriffe on his way to the Cape in 1773, and describes its locality as "on a rock in the sea opposite the fountain which waters Port Orotava." These rocks were the Burgado Cove to the east of Rambla del Castro, and it was again found growing in this neighbourhood in 1829 by Berthelot and Webb, who describe it in their admirable book on the "Histoire Naturelle des Iles Canaries." Before this date another French botanist, Broussonet, had "discovered" the plant a few miles further along the coast, at Dauté near Garachico, and after its complete disappearance from the Burgado rocks, owing probably to goats having destroyed it, it was re-discovered in the Dauté locality a few years ago, through the untiring efforts and perseverance of Dr. George

STATICES AND PRIDE OF TENERIFFE

Perez. Having heard of the plants growing on inaccessible rocks, he got a shepherd to secure the specimens for him, the plants being hauled up by means of ropes to which hooks were attached, and it was no doubt thanks to their position that even goats were not able to destroy them. So *Statice arborea* was rescued and is once more in cultivation, and one of the most ornamental and effective garden plants it is possible to see. The loose panicles of deep purple flower-heads last for weeks in perfection, and are so freely produced that even one plant of it seems to give colour to a whole garden. The statices endemic to the various islands form quite a long list and are all ornamental, and prove the fact I have already mentioned of the extremely restricted area in which many native plants are found. The true *Statice macrophylla* finds a home in only a small area on the north-east coast of Teneriffe and is another very showy species. *Statice frutescens* is very similar to *Statice arborea*, but is of much smaller stature; its native home appears to be—or to have been—on the rocky promontory of El Freyle, to the extreme west of Teneriffe.

From a single high rock, known as Tabucho,

near Marca, also on the west coast, came in 1907 a new variety, at first thought to be *Preauxii*, but it was eventually found to be an entirely new contribution and was named *Statice Perezii* after Dr. Perez who discovered the plant and sent the specimen to Kew.

The island of Gomera contributes the very blue-flowered *S. brassicifolia*, its winged stems making it easy to recognise, and from Lanzarote comes *S. puberula*, a more dwarf kind, very varying in colour. These appear to comprise the statices best known now in cultivation, though there are several other less interesting varieties.

Here, at Santa Ursula, great interest is also taken in the Echiums, another race of Canary plants. *Echium simplex* must be accorded first place, as it is commonly called Pride of Teneriffe; it bears one immense spike of white flowers, and like the aloe, after this one supreme effort the plant dies. The seed luckily germinates freely. From the island of La Palma had come seed of *Echium pininana*, and tales of a deep blue flower-spike said to rise from 9 ft. to 15 ft. in the air, and though the plants were only one year old some showed promise of flowering. The pinkish

flowered *E. auberianum*, like so many of the statices, has made its home in almost inaccessible places among the rocks on the Fortaleza at a height of some 7000 ft., close to the Cañadas.

Over the walls were hanging masses of *Lotus Berthelotii*, one of the native plants I most admired. Its long trails of soft grey leaves hang in garlands and in spring come the deep red flowers. The plant is known locally as *Pico de paloma* (pigeon's beak) and I found one seldom gave it its true botanical name, which does not seem to fit it. Here again is another plant whose native lair has been lost. A stretch of country between Villa Orotava and La Florida is known to have been its home, but for years past botanists have hunted for it in vain. A variety which differed slightly found a home in the Pinar above Arico, but that equally has disappeared.

V

TENERIFFE (*continued*)

To the east of the town lies a district where, in old days, the Spaniards built their villas, as summer residences, in which to escape from the heat and dust of the town. In those days vineyards and cornfields took the place of banana plantations and potato fields, and near some of the villas are to be seen to this day the old wine-presses with their gigantic beams made of the wood of the native pine. These presses have long been silent and idle, as disease ravaged the vines some fifty years ago, and "Canary sack" is no longer stored in the vast cellars of the old houses.

One of these old villas became our temporary home, so I am to be forgiven for placing it first on the list. A steep cobbled lane leads up from the Puerto, bordered with plane trees, and here and there great clumps of oleanders, to the plateau some 300 feet above the sea on which stands the

house of La Paz. The outer gate is guarded by the little chapel of Santo Amaro, and once a year the clanging bell summons worshippers to Mass and to escort the figure of the patron saint, amid incense and rockets, down the long cypress avenue to the terrace above the sea.

Each side of the faded green wooden doorway, two giant cypresses stand like sentries to guard the gate, through which may be seen, on one side, a row of flaunting red poinsettias, waving their gaudy blossoms above a low myrtle hedge, and on the other side the high garden wall is draped with orange creepers. At right angles to this path facing the entrance to the house, a long avenue of splendid lance-like cypresses rises above a thick hedge of myrtles whose trunks speak for themselves of their immense age. A round flight of low steps leads to the forecourt, and the tiny inner court is guarded by yet another faded green doorway. Here flowers run riot in a little garden where prim box hedges edge the paved walks. On a flagged terrace stands the "House of Peace," facing the Atlantic, and from the solid green panelled door there is an unbroken view down the long, straight avenue to the dazzling, dancing sea below.

Over the door is a weather-stained coat-of-arms, and above, again, on a piece of soft green scroll-work, is the Latin motto "HIC EST REQUIES MEA," as here to his house of rest came the original owner, to rest from his work in the town.

Very little seems to be known of the history of La Paz, but it seems fairly certain that it was built by an Irish family of the name of Walsh; who, with many of their fellow countrymen, emigrated to the Canaries after the siege of Limerick, and in the church of N. S. de la Peña de Francia, in the town, the tomb of Bernardo Walsh, who died in 1721, bears the same arms as those which are carved above the door. The family, who no doubt entered into business in the town, appear to have found a foreign name inconvenient and changed it into Valois, as Bernardo Walsh is described as alias Valois. The two Irish families of Walsh and Cologan intermarried at some time, and the property passed to the Cologans, who assumed the Spanish title of Marquez de la Candia; to this family La Paz still belongs, though it is many years since they have lived there, and the present owner, who lives in Spain, has never even seen the property.

LA PAZ

LA PAZ

The traveller Humboldt is said to have been a guest at La Paz for a few days, which has caused many Germans to call it "Humboldt's villa," and even to go so far as to say that he built it, though he only paid a flying visit of four days to Orotava in 1799. From the account of his visit in his "Personal Narrative" it appears doubtful as to whether he stayed at La Paz or at the house belonging to the Cologan family, in Villa Orotava. Alluding to his short stay, he remarks: "It is impossible to speak of Orotava without recalling to the remembrance of the friends of science, the name of Don Bernardo Cologan, whose house at all times was open to travellers of every nation. We could have wished to have sojourned for some time in Don Bernardo's house, and to have visited with him the charming scenery of San Juan de la Rambla. But on a voyage such as we had undertaken, the present is but little enjoyed. Continually haunted by the fear of not executing the design of to-morrow we live in perpetual uneasiness. . . ." Further on he says: "Don Cologan's family has a country house nearer the coast than that I have just mentioned. This house, called La Paz, is connected with a circumstance that rendered it peculiarly

interesting to us. M. le Borde, whose death we deplored, was its inmate during his last visit to the Canary Islands. It was in a neighbouring plain that he measured the base, by which he determined the height of the Peak." The house has no pretensions to any great architectural beauty, but has an air of peace and stateliness which the hand of time gives to many a house of far less imposing dimensions than its modern neighbour.

On one side of the house a few steps lead down to the walled garden, a large square outlined and traversed by vine-clad pergolas, which again form four more squares. In the centre of one an immense pine tree shelters a round water basin, where papyrus and arums make a welcome shelter for the tiny green frogs. One feature of these old Spanish gardens might well be copied in other lands; a low double plaster wall some two feet thick, called locally a *poyo*, makes a charming border for plants: geraniums, verbenas, stocks, carnations, poppies, and the hanging *Pico de paloma*, all look their best grown in this way, and at a lower level a wide low seat ran along the walls. The beds were edged with sweet-smelling geranium, the white-leafed salvia, a close-growing

thyme, or box, all kept clipped in neat, compact hedges. Some of the garden has now, alas! been given over to a more profitable use than that of growing flowers, and a potato crop is succeeded in summer by maize, but enough remains for a wealth of flowering trees, shrubs, creepers and plants. The brilliant orange *Bignonia venusta* covers a long stretch of the pergola, drapes the garden wall and climbs up to the flat roof-top of one of the detached wings of the house. In summer a white stephanotis disputes possession and covers the tiled roof of a garden shed, filling the whole air with its delicious scent. Among other sweet-smelling plants were daturas, whose great trumpets are especially night-scented flowers, and in early spring the tiny white blossoms of the creeping smilex smell so much like the orange blossoms which have not yet opened, that their delicious fragrance might easily be mistaken for it. Sweet-scented geraniums grow in every corner, and heliotropes, sweet peas and stocks all add to the fragrance of the garden.

The grounds contain several good specimen palms, too many perhaps for the health of flowers, as their roots seem to poison the ground; hibiscus,

coral trees, pittosperums and a long list of trees common to most subtropical gardens find a home, but the tree I most admired was a venerable specimen of the native olive growing near a grove of feathery giant bamboos.

The cypress avenue leads to a broad terrace at a dizzy height above the sea; the surf beats against the cliffs below, but the salt air does not seem to affect the beautiful vegetation, and for long years great clumps of Euphorbias and Kleinias have stood against the winter storms when great breakers roll in and crash against the rocks. On the left lies the little flat town of the Puerto, over which in clear weather the Island of La Palma emerges from its mantle of clouds, and many a gorgeous sunset bathes the whole town in a mist of rosy light, recalling the legend that in days of old, navigators had christened the little fishing-port the Puerto de Oro, after Casa de Oro, the House of Gold, which title they had given to the Peak, as night after night the setting sun had turned its cap of snow to pale gold.

On the right the broken coast-line stretches away into the far distance, and the mountains rise above the little villages; they in their turn are caught

by the setting sun and kissed by her last departing rays, and turned to a rosy pink, but as the ball of fire sinks into the sea, the shadows creep up, and in one moment in this land which knows no twilight, the light is gone and the cold greyness of night takes possession.

Just behind La Paz are the Botanical gardens, which owe their existence to the Marquez de Nava, who in 1795 undertook at enormous expense to level the hill of Durasno, and lay it out for receiving the treasures of other climes. Though complaints are often made of its distance from the so-called "English colony," the site was well chosen, as the soil on this side of the *barranco*, which separates it from the lava bed, is decidedly more fertile, and being of a heavier nature and deeper is less liable to blight and disease, which are the curse of the gardens on light dry soil, and which no amount of irrigation will cure. In this garden are collected treasures from every part of the world; new ground is sadly needed as the immense trees and shrubs have made the cultivation of flowers a great difficulty. Humboldt appreciated the use of these gardens for the introduction of plants from Asia, Africa and South America, remarking

that: "In happier times when maritime wars shall no longer interrupt communication, the garden of Teneriffe may become extremely useful with respect to the great number of plants which are sent from the Indies to Europe: for ere they reach our coasts they often perish owing to the length of the passage, during which they inhale an air impregnated with salt water. These plants would meet at Orotava with the care and climate necessary for their preservation; at Durasno, the Protea, the Psidium, the Jambos, the Chirinoya of Peru, the sensitive plant, and the Heliconia all grow in the open air."

To give a list of all the trees and plants would be an impossibility and any one who is interested in them will find an excellent account of the gardens in a pamphlet written by Dr. Morris of Kew, who was much interested in his visit to the Canary Islands in 1895. The gardens for some years fell into a neglected state from lack of funds, but once again bid fair to regain their former glory under new management. Among the chief ornaments of the gardens are the very fine specimens of the native pine, *Pinus canariensis*, an immense *Ficus nitida*, one of the best shade-giving trees, and

BOTANICAL GARDENS, OROTAVA

travellers from the tropics will recognise an old friend in *Ravenala madagascariensis*, the "Traveller's Tree," in the socket of whose leaves water is always to be found.

Further up the road is the property of San Bartolomeo ; the land is now entirely devoted to banana cultivation, the house is handed over to the tender mercies of a *medianero*, and the garden tells a tale of departed glories. In the *patio* of the house a donkey is stalled under a purple bougainvillea, and tall cypresses look down reproachfully at the fallen state of things. In the chapel of the house mass is still said daily, but for seven years I was told the *sala* had not been opened. In the garden the myrtle hedges have grown out of all bounds, jessamines have become a dense tangle, and the plaster *poyos*, which once were full of plants, are crumbling to decay.

Near by is El Cypres, formerly a villa, and named after its splendid cypresses, which mark every old Spanish garden, and now unfortunately appear to be little planted. This villa has been turned into a *pension*, and its glory is also departed. El Drago has been more fortunate, and has been rescued by foreign hands, and the wealth of

creepers, especially *Plumbago capensis*, which in autumn has a complete canopy of pale blue flowers clambering over the pergolas, together with its splendid trees, make a landmark in the landscape.

A few miles away I wandered one evening into another deserted garden, not entirely uncared for, as I was told the owner from the villa came there for a few weeks in summer. This garden showed that it had originally been laid out with great care and thought, not in the haphazard way which spoils so many gardens, and afterwards I learnt that it had been planned by a Portuguese gardener, and I recognised the little beds with their neat box hedges, the clumps of rosemaries and heaths which, though they were somewhat unkempt, showed that in former days they had been clipped into shape after the manner of all true Portuguese gardens. The garden walls and plaster seats of charming designs showed traces of fresco work in delicate colouring, and soft green tiles edged the water basin, in which grew a tangle of papyrus, yams and arums. A garden house, whose roof was completely covered with wistaria, was surrounded by a balcony whose walls had also been frescoed, but now, alas, packing cases for bananas had sorely damaged them. The

sole occupants of the garden appeared to be a pair of peacocks; the male bird at the sight of an intruder spread his fan and strutted down the terrace steps to do the honours of the garden. The flower beds, which had once been full of begonias, lilies, pelargoniums, and every kind of treasured plant, are now too much overshadowed by large trees, but I longed to have the restoring of this garden to its former beauty.

On the other side of the yawning *barranco* lie Sant Antonio and El Sitio del Pardo, both old houses, built long before the town began to develop and new houses cropped up on the western side. Across this *barranco* a new road, which was to lead from the *carretera* to the Puerto, was commenced some years ago, and left unfinished, after even the bridge had been constructed, because the owner of a small piece of land refused to sell, or allow the road to pass through his property. Thus it remains a "broken road," because, in true Spanish fashion, no one had taken the trouble to make sure that the land was available before the undertaking was commenced; and still all the traffic to the port has to wind its way slowly along several miles of unnecessary road.

El Sitio is another old villa which was visited by Humboldt, who was present on the eve of St. John's Day at a pastoral *fête* in the garden of Mr. Little, who appears to have been the original owner of El Sitio. Humboldt says: "This gentleman, who rendered great service to the Canarians during the last famine, has cultivated a hill covered with volcanic substances. He has formed in this delicious site an English garden, whence there is a magnificent view of the Peak, of the villages along the coast, and the isle of La Palma, which is bounded by the vast expanse of the Atlantic. I cannot compare this prospect with any, except the views of the Bay of Genoa and Naples; but Orotava is greatly superior to both in the magnitude of the masses and richness of the vegetation. In the beginning of the evening, the slope of the volcano exhibited on a sudden a most extraordinary spectacle. The shepherds, in conformity to a custom no doubt introduced by the Spaniards, though it dates from the highest antiquity, had lighted the fires of St. John. The scattered masses of fire, and the columns of smoke driven by the wind, formed a fine contrast with the deep verdure of the forest, which covered the sides of the Peak. Shouts

EL SITIO DEL PARDO

of joy resounding from afar were the only sounds that broke the silence of nature in the solitary regions."

El Sitio is also well known as being the house where Miss North made her headquarters when she visited Teneriffe, and made her collection of drawings of plants from Canary Gardens, which are in the gallery at Kew. Miss North, in her book of "Recollections," appears to have thoroughly enjoyed her stay, and describes this garden as follows:

"There were myrtle trees ten or twelve feet high, Bougainvilleas running up cypress trees. Mrs. Smith (the owner of the garden in those days) complained of their untidiness, and great white Longiflorum lilies growing as high as myself. The ground was white with fallen orange and lemon petals; the huge white Cherokee roses (*Rosa lævigata*) covered a great arbour and tool-house with their magnificent flowers. I never smelt roses so sweet as those in that garden. Over all peeped the snowy point of the Peak, at sunrise and sunset most gorgeous, but even more dazzling in the moonlight. From the garden I could stroll up some wild hills of lava, where Mr. Smith had allowed the natural vegetation of the island to

have all its own way. Magnificent aloes, cactus, euphorbias, arums, cinerarias, sundry heaths, and other peculiar plants, were to be seen in their fullest beauty. Eucalyptus trees had been planted on the top, and were doing well with their bark hanging in rags and tatters about them. I scarcely ever went out without finding some new wonder to paint, lived a life of most perfect peace and happiness, and got strength every day with my kind friends."

This property has been fortunate enough to pass to other hands who still appreciate it, and the above paragraph, though written so many years ago, is still a very good description of the garden.

Sant Antonio has not been so fortunate. For some years its garden was the pride of Orotava. In the terraced ground in front of the house, plants and trees from every part of the world found a home; but when the maker of this garden left it, the owner ruthlessly tore up the garden to plant bananas. Here and there among the banana-groves may be seen a solitary bougainvillea still climbing over its trellised archway, but little remains, except on one terrace below the house, to show that the

garden was ever cared for. In the grounds there still remains some very good *treillage* work. The pattern of the screens, arches, and arbours are distinctly Chippendale in character and design, and are painted a soft dull green. In several other instances I noticed admirable patterns in the woodwork of screens to deep verandahs, and in the upper part of wooden doorways. Chippendale must at one time have been much admired and copied in the Canaries, and to this day, in even the humblest cottage, the chairs are of true Chippendale design, though roughly carved.

VI

TENERIFFE (*continued*)

Icod de los Vinos, a little town on the coast, some seventeen miles from Orotava, was in the days of its prosperity a great centre of the wine and cochineal trade. Its prosperous days are a thing of the past, and to-day it appears to be rather a sleepy little town; but possibly for just this reason it is more picturesque than some of its richer neighbours, whose inhabitants can afford to build modern and most unsightly houses.

The drive from Orotava to Icod is by far the most beautiful drive in the island. Once the dusty stretch of *carretera* between the junction of the road from Tacoronte to the Puerto is left behind, the drive becomes full of interest. The road passes below the picturesque little village of Realejo Bajo, skirts the towering cliffs on which is perched the little village of Icod el Alto some 1700 ft. above, and winds along the sea shore. Every turn of the

road brings into sight a fresh view of the deeply indented coast-line between the storm-bent old tamarisk trees which edge the road for miles. The long avenues of eucalyptus trees, with their ragged bark hanging in strips, will always be associated in my mind with all the carriage roads in Teneriffe. Early in March the vegetation reminds one that spring has begun. The geraniums in the cottage gardens are showing promise of their summer glory, fringing the walls or hanging in long trails from the little flat roof tops. The winter rains have washed the dust off the hedge-rows and banks, and in places where water is dripping from the rocks they are draped with a thick coating of maiden-hair fern, and the pale lilac blossoms of the wild coltsfoot, *Cineraria tussilaginis*, stud the banks. I should imagine this to have been the parent of the variety known in cultivation as *Cineraria stellata*, so much grown of late years in English green-houses. The rocks themselves are studded with the curious flat *Sempervivum tabulæformæ*, looking like great green nail heads, and *S. canariensis* was just throwing up flower-spikes from its rosettes of cabbage-like leaves. Here and there a little water-fall gives welcome moisture to water-loving plants.

Common brambles, encouraged by the dampness, grow to vast dimensions and hang in rich profusion, winding themselves into cords until they look like the lianes of a tropical forest. Far down in the crevasse below the stone bridges, the long fronds of ferns, the untorn leaves of a seedling banana, with the large leaves of the common yam, suggest a sub-tropical garden.

Between the road and the sea are great stretches of land cultivated with bananas, a mine of wealth to their owners, who now no longer visit their summer residences on these estates. Neglected gardens tell a tale of departed glories, and many of the houses are left to fall to rack and ruin, or are merely inhabited by the *medianero* who has rented the ground.

Near the outskirts of San Juan de la Rambla a stone arch crosses the road, and just beyond, the deep Barranco Ruiz cuts into the mountain sides. It is a grand rocky ravine, and by a steep narrow path which winds up the side it is possible to reach Icod el Alto at the top of the *barranco.*

The little town of San Juan de la Rambla is very picturesquely situated, and every traveller is shown the beautifully carved latticed balcony on an old

house, as the carriage rattles through the little narrow street. We are told that luckily the balcony is made of the very hard and durable wood of the beautiful native pine, *Pinus canariensis*, which is rapidly becoming a rare tree in the lower parts of the island. The wood itself is locally called *tea*, and the trees are called *teasolas* by the country people, who know no other name for them.

Once San Juan is passed the Peak becomes the centre of interest. The luxuriant vegetation is left behind, the beauty of the coast is forgotten, and the completely different aspect which the Peak presents from this side absorbs one's attention. The foreground is nothing but rocky ground, but numbers of *Cistus Berthelotianus* brighten up the barren ground with their bushes of showy rose-coloured flowers. In places they were interspersed with great quantities of asphodels, whose branching spikes of starry white and brownish flowers seem hardly worthy of their romantic name. In reality they have always sadly shattered my mental picture of the asphodel—the chosen flower of the ancients, the flower of blessed oblivion—this surely should have been a superb lily, pure white, and "fields of asphodels" which we read of should be rich green

meadows full of moisture, where the lilies should grow knee deep, not arid tufa slopes where erect rods of this strange blossom rise from a cluster of half-starved narrow leaves. The local name is *gamona*, and in Grand Canary where they abound, one large tract of land is called *El llano de las gamonas*, the plain of asphodels.

At a higher level begins the *Pinar* or forest of that most beautiful of all pines, the native *Pinus canariensis*. Here on the lower cultivated ground the few specimens that remain, having escaped complete destruction, are mostly mutilated, having had all their lower branches cut for firewood or possibly for fear they should shade some little patch of potatoes or onions, and the younger trees resemble a mop more than a tree, with nothing left but a tuft of fluffy branches at the top.

The little town of Icod de los Vinos is prettily situated, being built on a great slope, intersected by many streams of lava. There is a very picturesque Plaza with a little garden and fountain in front of the old convent of San Augustin, whose façade has several carved latticed balconies which are the great beauty of all the old houses in Teneriffe.

CONVENT OF SANT AUGUSTIN, ICOD DE LOS VINOS

Visitors to Icod are all taken to see their famous dragon tree, *Dracœna Draco*, of which the inhabitants are justly proud, as it is now the largest and oldest in the island since the destruction of its rival in Villa Orotava. We were assured its age was over 3000 years, an assertion I was not prepared to dispute, and hardly even ventured to look incredulous, and so cast a slur on their almost sacred *El drago*. There is no doubt the growth of these trees is almost incredibly slow; they increase in height in the same way as a palm, putting out new leaves in the heart of the tufted crowns and dropping an equal number of old ones, which process leaves a curiously scarred marking on the bark. No one seems to know how often a tuft flowers, but certainly only once in many years, and it is only after flowering that the stem forks, so in specimens which are centuries old the head of the tree becomes a mass of short branches with tufted heads, which in their turn become divided, and so it goes on until one begins to wonder whether there is not some truth in the immense age attributed to them. The curious aerial roots which descend from the branches gradually creep down, and it is the layers upon layers of these that strengthen the

original stem sufficiently to enable it to bear the immense weight of its tufted crown, as decay seems always to set in in the heart of the stem, and by the time the trees attain to a venerable age they are invariably hollow. An old document describing the tree says "it has no heart within. The wood is very spongy and light, so that it serves for the covering of hives or making shields. The gum which this tree exudes is called dragon's blood, and that which the tree sweats out without cutting is the best, and is called 'blood by the drop.' It is very good for medicine, for sealing letters, and for making the teeth red."

Icod is a good centre for expeditions, and those who are brave enough to face the dirt and discomfort of a Spanish *fonda* can pass a week or so very pleasantly. It is a matter of great regret that better accommodation is not available in many of the smaller towns, and I own that personally I could never bring myself to face the native inn. No scenery is worth the discomfort of dirty beds, impossible food and the noise of the *patio* of a *fonda*, where as often as not, goats, chickens, pigeons and a braying donkey all add to the concert of the harsh loud voices of the women servants.

Now that motor-cars are available in Orotava it renders matters much easier for making expeditions in the day. Formerly, the greater part of the day was occupied by the drive to and from Icod, but if an early start is made, on arrival at Icod there is still a long day before one, and it is possible to make a visit to the old Guanche burial caves or to continue the road to Garachico. This now unimportant little village was once the chief port of the island, and the number of old churches and convents still remaining speak for themselves of the former importance of the place. In the days when Icod de los Vinos, as its name implies, was celebrated for its vines, the wine which was made there was shipped from the port of Garachico. The old sugar factory which still stands was once the property of an English firm, but the various booms in the wine, cochineal and sugar trade, are things of the past, and Orotava is now the centre of the banana boom.

Possibly the pleasantest expeditions from Icod are those which lead through the pine forest past the Ermita Sta. Barbara. Good walkers will find magnificent walks along fairly level paths once they have accomplished the first climb of about

3000 ft., and can make their way along to the Corona and down the steep zig-zag path below Icod el Alto, or there is a lower track which makes a good mule ride back to Orotava.

VII

TENERIFFE (*continued*)

MANY visitors to Teneriffe find their way across the mountains from Orotava to Guimar in the course of the winter or spring, which is the best time for the expedition. Though the actual time required for the journey from point to point may be only about seven hours, according to the condition of the road, it is best to make an early start and to have the whole day before one, so as to have plenty of time to rest on the way and enjoy all there is to be seen.

Once the last steep streets of the Villa Orotava are left behind the country at once changes its aspect. The banana fields, which have become somewhat monotonous after a long stay in their midst, have vanished, the air is cooler, and in the early morning the ground is saturated with dew. In spring the young corn makes the country intensely green, and the pear and other

fruit blossoms lighten up the landscape, while in the hedge-rows are clumps of the little red *Fuchsia coccinea*, and great bushes of the common yellow broom. Here and there the two Canary St. John's worts, *Hypericum canariensis* and *H. floribundum*, are covered with berries, their flowers having fallen some months before. Ferns and sweet violets grow on the damp and shady banks, and occasionally fine bushes of *Cytisus prolifer* were to be seen smothered with their soft, silky-looking white flowers. Gradually the region of the chestnut woods is reached, but these having only dropped their leaves after the spell of cold weather early in January, are still leafless, and it is sad to see how terribly the trees are mutilated by the peasants. Though not allowed to fell whole trees, the law does not appear to protect their branches, and often nothing but the stump and a few straggling boughs remain, the rest having been hacked off for firewood. Small bushes of the white-flowered *Erica arborea* soon appear, and the showy rose-coloured flowers of *Cistus vaginatus* were new to me.

At a height of about 3800 feet the level of the strong stream called Agua Mansa is reached, and

though it is not actually on the road to Guimar many travellers make a short détour to visit the source of the stream and the beautifully wooded valley. The absence of woods in the lower country no doubt makes the vegetation on the steep slopes of the little gorge doubly appreciated. Many narrow paths lead through the laurel and heath, and on the shady side of the valley the extreme moisture of the air has clothed the stems of the trees with grey hoary lichens. The luxury of the sound of a running stream is rare in Teneriffe and one is tempted to linger and enjoy the scene under a giant chestnut tree, which has shaded many a picnic party from the Puerto.

By retracing one's steps for a short distance the track is regained; Pedro Gil looms far ahead and the long steep ascent begins, up the narrow mule path among thickets of the tree heaths. Here these heaths are merely shrubby, not the splendid specimens which may be seen near Agua Garcia, where they are protected from the charcoal burners, but the wide stretches covered with white flowers are very lovely appearing through the mist, which even on the finest day is apt to sweep across occasionally. The vegetation on

these Cumbres is much the same as that which is passed through on the way to the Cañadas, and in spring the *Adenocarpus viscosus* or *anagyrus*, its tiny yellow flowers growing among the small leaves which crowd the branches, is about the last sign of plant life. Above this region are merely occasional patches of moss which live on the moisture of the mist which more often than not enwraps these heights. In clear weather, the long and rather tedious scramble of the last part of the road is soon forgotten in the delight at the magnificent view at the end. The top of the pass, 6800 ft., is like the back-bone of the island, and on the one side the whole valley of Orotava lies stretched below, with the Peak standing grand and majestic on the left, and on the other side lie the slopes down to the pine woods above Arafo. It is hard to agree with a writer who describes the scene as one of "immense desolation and ugliness, the silence broken only by the croaking voice of a crow passing overhead." It is just this silence and stillness which appeals to so many in mountain regions; there is something intensely restful yet awe-inspiring in the complete peace which reigns in high altitudes in fair weather.

A long pause is necessary to rest both man and beast, as not only is the path a long and trying one, but it is possible for the sun to be so extremely hot even at that altitude that it seems to bake the steep and arid slopes of lava and volcanic sand, and the loose cinders near the end of the climb make bad going for the mules. The so-called path becomes almost invisible except to the quick eye of the mules, accustomed as they are to pick their way across these stretches of loose scoriæ. Often the question "Which is the way?" is met by the owner of the mule answering "*Il mulo sabe*" (the mule knows), instead of saying, "To the right" or "To the left," and I generally found he was right.

Many people prefer the ascent to the descent, and certainly though I have nothing but praise for mules as a means of locomotion going uphill, there are moments when I preferred to trust to my own legs going down the loose cindery track.

The fact that the eastern mountain slopes are warmer and drier, as the rainfall is not so great, encourages the vegetation to rise to a much higher altitude and the barren world of lava and cinders is sooner left behind. Our old friend the

Adenocarpus soon greeted us, like a pioneer of plant life, and gradually came the different regions of pine, tree heaths, laurels, and then the grassy slopes.

The gorge known as the Valle is described as "one of the most stupendous efforts of eruptive force to be seen in the world, the gap appearing to have been absolutely thrown into space." A network of what might well be mistaken for dykes seems to cut up the surface, and the whole formation of the Valle is of great interest to geologists. To the ordinary observer it is certainly suggestive of a desolate waste, and the black hill known as the Volcan of 1705 does not help to give life to the scene. The white lichen, which is the true pioneer of plant life, is only beginning to appear, though in crevices where deep cracks in the lava have probably exposed soil below the sturdy Euphorbias are getting a hold, and a few other robust plants, such as the feathery *Sonchus leptocephalus*, which I have always noticed seems to revel in lava. Possibly another century may make a great difference to the scene, but certainly during the past two hundred years there has not been much sign of returning vegetation, and the fiery stream

has done its work thoroughly. The relief is great at once more reaching the pine woods above Arafo, and the fatigue, not peril, of the descent being over it is pleasant to find the comfort of the well-named Buen Retiro Hotel at Guimar.

Though over a thousand feet above the sea, the situation is so sheltered that Guimar boasts of one of the best and sunniest climates in Teneriffe, the little village lying as it were in a nest among the hills. The flowery garden of the hotel tells its own tale, better than any advertisement or guide-book, and a week may be spent exploring the various *barrancos* in the neighbourhood, especially by botanists, or lovers of plants. The Barranco del Rio is renowned as being about the best botanical collecting ground in the island. Dr. Morris says he found there no fewer than a hundred different species of native plants, many of which he had not seen elsewhere. The dripping rocks are clothed with maiden-hair fern, and the giant buttercup, *Ranunculus cortusæfolius*, appears to revel in the damp and the high air. The Barranco Badajoz is perhaps wilder and more precipitous; in places the rocky walls of these gorges rise to 200 ft., and appeal immensely to those who enjoy wild scenery.

The lack of a roaring river tumbling down them I never quite got over, during all my stay in Teneriffe. Perhaps in a bygone age they existed, and owing to some eruption cracks were formed and the water vanished, as the bed of the stream seems to be there, but, alas! no water or only a trickling stream. The tiniest stream has to be utilised to provide water for a village below or for irrigation purposes, and this, combined with the deforestation of the island, no doubt has helped to drain the *barrancos*. There is more water in the Guimar ravines than in most, and from the Barranco del Rio or the Madre del Agua I should imagine the whole water-supply of the village is derived.

Those who are interested in relics should visit Socorro, about an hour distant from Guimar, the original home of the miraculous image of the Virgin de Candelaria. So celebrated was this image that nearly a whole book on the subject has been issued by the Hakluyt Society, edited and translated from old documents by Sir Clement Markham. The image is supposed to have been found in about the year 1400, by some shepherds, standing upright on a stone in a dry deserted spot near the sandy beach. A cross was afterwards erected by

Christians when the Spaniards occupied the island to mark the spot, and in front of it was built the small hermitage called El Socorro. One shepherd saw what he supposed to be a woman carrying a child standing in his path, and as the law in those days forbad a man to speak to a woman alone in a solitary place, on pain of death, he made signs to her to move away in order that he and his sheep might pass. No notice being taken and no reply made, he took up a stone in order to hurl it at the supposed woman, but his arm became instantly stiff, and he could not move it. His companion, though filled with fear, sought to ascertain whether she was a living woman, and tried to cut one of her fingers, but only cut his own, and did not even mark the finger of the image. These accordingly were the two first miracles of the sacred figure.

These shepherds related their experiences to the Lord of Guimar, who after being shown the stiff arm and cut fingers of the men, summoned his councillors to consult as to what had best be done. Accompanied by his followers and guided by the shepherds, he came to the spot and ordered the shepherds to lift the figure, as it apparently was no living thing, and to remove it to his house.

On approaching the image to carry out their Lord's orders, the stiff arm of the one and the cut fingers of the other instantly became cured. The Lord and his followers were so struck with the strange and splendid dress of the woman, who was now invested as well with supernatural powers, that they lost their first terror. Determined to do honour to so strange a guest within his dominions, the Lord of Guimar raised the image in his arms and transported it to his own house.

Unbelievers say that the image was merely the figure-head of a ship which was washed up on the beach, but the faithful maintain that so beautiful was the image, so gorgeous its apparel and so brilliant the gold with which it was gilded, that it was the work of no human hands, and contact with the sea would have destroyed the brilliancy of its colouring.

The Lord of Guimar sent the news of the wonderful discovery to the other chiefs in the island, offering that the image, evidently endowed with supernatural and healing powers, should spend half the year within the territory of the Lord of Taoro. This offer was declined, but the chief

came with many followers to see the new wonder, which was set up on the altar in a cave and guarded with great care. For some forty years the image remained in the care of infidels, who regarded it with great awe, and then it fell to the lot of a boy named Auton, who had been converted to Christianity by the Spaniards, to enlighten the natives as to the nature of their treasure. On being shown the figure he instantly recognised it as being a representation of the Virgin, and after having prayed before it, he instructed the natives in the story of the Virgin Mary. The boy was in return made sacristan of the image and it was guarded day and night. At certain intervals visions of processions on the beach were seen and remains of wax candles were found, and a shower of wax upon the beach was supposed to have been sent to provide wax for candles to be burnt in honour of Our Lady of Candelaria.

The neighbouring islands soon heard tales of the holy relic and the inhabitants came to visit it. For several centuries wonderful miracles were at different times ascribed to it, and it continued to be regarded with the deepest reverence, though the housing and care of the image was the cause of

various feuds, and on one occasion it was stolen and carried away to Fuerteventura, but was returned.

Unfortunately, during a great storm in 1826, the holy relic was swept away into the sea, and thus was the original Virgin de Candelaria lost, and though a new image was made and blessed by the Pope it has never been regarded with quite the same awe and reverence, though many pilgrims visit the church on August 15, the feast of Candelaria, and again on February 2.

VIII

GRAND CANARY

I HAVE noticed that there is always a certain amount of jealousy existing between the inhabitants of a group of islands. In old days they were of course absolutely unknown to each other, and even spoke such a different language that they had some difficulty in making themselves understood. Though such is naturally not the case to-day when in a few hours the little Interinsular steamers cross from one island to another, still in Teneriffe you are apt to be told there is nothing to be seen in Grand Canary, or if you happen to visit Las Palmas first you will probably be told you are wasting your time in proposing to spend some weeks or months in Teneriffe or in even contemplating a flying visit to the other islands.

It was with a feeling of great curiosity that I watched our approach to Grand Canary, as one evening late in May our steamer crept round the

isthmus known as La Isleta and glided into the harbour of Puerto de la Luz. Many towns look their best from the sea and this is perhaps especially true of Las Palmas. The sun was setting behind the low hills which rise above the long line of sand dunes, dotted with tamarisks, running between the port and the isleta, and in the evening light the town itself, some three miles away, looked far from unattractive, its cathedral towers rising above the palm trees on the shore.

On landing the illusion is soon destroyed; the dust, which is the curse of Las Palmas, was being blown gaily along by the north-east wind, which seems to blow perpetually, and the steam tram which connects the port and the town was grinding along, emitting showers of black smoke, and I began to think the writer was not far wrong who said Las Palmas was "a place of barbed wire and cinders."

Most travellers' destination is the hotel at Santa Catalina, lying midway between the port and the town, and here many of them remain for the rest of their stay, not being tempted ever to set foot outside the pleasant grounds and comfortable hotel,

LAS PALMAS

except possibly to play a game of golf on the links above, which are a great attraction and boon to those who are spending the winter basking in the sunshine in search of health.

The island appears to have altered its name from Canaria to Gran Canaria because of the stout resistance offered by the natives, who called themselves Canarios, to the Spanish invasion. The original name is said to have had some connection with the breed of large dogs peculiar to the island, though none appear to exist now. As regards the shape of the island the following is a very good description: "The form of the island is nearly circular, and greatly resembles a saucerful of mud turned upside down, with the sides furrowed by long and deep ravines. The highest point is a swelling upland known as Los Pechos, 6401 ft." I own that as I approached the island there was a curious sense of something lacking, something missing, and then I realised that we were no longer to live under the shadow of the Peak, that an occasional distant glimpse is all we should see of the great mountain which we had grown to look on as a friend.

The nearest object of interest to the hotel is the

Santa Catalina fountain, where in August 1492, after praying in the chapel, Christopher Columbus filled his water-barrels with a store of water which was to last him until the New World was sighted. Columbus on each of his expeditions touched at the Canaries; but at the very outset of his first voyage, one of his ships having lost her rudder and suffered other damage in storms encountered on the way, Columbus cruised for three weeks among the islands in search of another vessel to replace his *caravel.* Though he heard rumours of three Portuguese *caravels* hovering off the coast of Ferro (now called Hierro) three days' calm detained him, and by the time he reached the neighbourhood where the ships had been seen, they had vanished, and repairing his rudder as best he could he started in search of an unknown land, eventually reaching one of the Bahama group. Columbus' next visit to the Canaries was on his second voyage of discovery, when he again called at the islands, this time taking wood, water, live stock, plants and seeds to be propagated in Hispaniola, where he had already been so struck with the beautiful and varied vegetation. In the town of Las Palmas an old house is pointed out as the house where Christopher

Columbus died; but I am afraid, if we are to believe historians, this is merely a flight of the imagination. In Washington Irving's "Life of Columbus" we are told that he died at Seville surrounded by devoted friends, and a note says: "The body of Columbus was first deposited in the convent of St. Francisco, and his obsequies were celebrated with funereal pomp in the parochial church of Santa Maria de la Antigua, in Valladolid. His remains were transported in 1513 to the Carthusian convent of Las Cuevas, in Seville. In the year 1536 the bodies of Columbus and his son Diego were removed to Hispaniola and interred by the side of the grand altar of the cathedral of the city of San Domingo. But even here they did not rest in quiet; for on the cession of Hispaniola to the French in 1795 they were again disinterred, and conveyed by the Spaniards with great pomp and ceremony to the cathedral of Havanna in Cuba, where they remain at present."

One of the easiest expeditions from Las Palmas is along the main road to the south of the island, either driving or by motor. Long stretches of banana fields provide the fruit for the English market, which finds its way daily on to the mole;

and in spring hundreds of carts, with potato-boxes labelled "Covent Garden," come from the same district. A little way before reaching the village of Tinama, which is built amid desolate surroundings of lava and black cinders, the road passes through a tunnel, which must have been somewhat of an undertaking to bore, and then a vast bed of lava crosses the road. Here some huge clumps of *Euphorbia canariensis* show that this plant is not peculiar to any one island, but is equally at home on any bed of lava or cliff.

Telde, famous for its oranges—said to be the best in the world—is not a very interesting town; but from a little distance, combined with the almost adjoining village of Los Llanos, its Moorish dome amid groves of palm trees, and scattered groups of white houses, make it unlike most other Canary towns. The celebrated orange groves are some distance off, and it is feared that so little care is taken of the trees that the disease and blight which have ravaged nearly all the groves in the archipelago will soon attack these. The disease could be kept at bay by insecticides and combined effort, but it is no use for one grower to wage war against the pest, if his neighbour calmly allows it to get ahead in his groves,

though the excellence of the oranges makes it seem as if they deserved more care. If disaster overtakes the banana trade—and already I heard whispers of grumbling at the absurd price of land, and rumours of as good land and plenty of water to be had on the West Coast of Africa, where labour is half the price—possibly orange-growing may be taken up by men who have learnt their experience in Florida, and by careful cultivation another golden harvest may be reaped.

The ultimate destination of most travellers in this direction is the Montaña de las Cuatro Puertas (the Mountain of the Four Doors), which is a most curious and interesting example of a native place of worship. The Canarios seem to have been especially fond of cave-dwellings, which are very common in Grand Canary, though they are by no means unknown in the other islands; and it is no unusual thing to find districts where a scanty population is troglodytic in habit, living entirely in cave-dwellings scooped out of the soft sandstone rock. Some families have quite a good-sized though strange home, and besides rooms with whitewashed walls are stables for goats or mules. One writer says: "The hall-mark of gentility in

troglodyte circles is the possession *of a door*. This shows that the family pays house-tax, which is not levied upon those who live the simpler life, and are content with an old sack hanging across the open doorway."

Webb and Berthelot, in their "Histoire Naturelle," seem to have been much struck by these cave-dwellings, and the following account appears in their description of the Ciudad de las Palmas: "The slopes above the town on the west are pierced by grottoes inhabited by families of artisans; narrow paths have been made in the face of the cliffs by which to get to these excavations. After sunset, when the mountain is in deep shadow, the troglodyte quarter begins to light up, and all these aerial lights, which shine for a moment and then instantly disappear, produce the most curious effect." The "Mountain of the Four Doors" is of much larger dimensions than any ordinary cave-dwelling, as the whole mountain appears to have been excavated, and would certainly have made a very draughty dwelling, as the four entrances which give the mountain its name are only separated by columns, thus allowing free entrance to the wind. The sacred hill is said to have been partly occupied

by embalmers of the dead, the mummies being eventually removed to the burial cave on one side. Another side of the hill was the residence of the *Faycans*, or priests, who conducted the funeral ceremony; and there were the consecrated virgins, or *harimaguedas*, who were here kept in the strictest seclusion for years, employed in the gruesome occupation of sewing the goat-skins for wrapping up the mummies. The Canarios appear to have regarded a shelf in the burial cave running north and south as being the most honourable position, and on these they placed the bodies of highest rank, judging from the mummies found on them, as the leather is often richly embroidered, and the greatest care was taken in embalming the bodies. The inferiors were laid east and west. Any one who is interested in the study of the Canary mummies will find much to interest them in the Museum in Las Palmas, which is said to be richer in remains of aboriginals than any other museum in the world. Here may be seen rows of mummies in glass cases, some curious pottery, and the *Pintaderas*, or dyes, which were used to stamp designs on the skin or leather.

In the same museum the sight of the fearsome

"devil-fish," in the room devoted to local fishes, must, I think, have made many visitors from Orotava shudder to think of the light-hearted way in which they had gaily bathed on the Martianez beach—an amusement I often considered dangerous from the strength of the breakers and the strong under-current; but when added to this I was assured the monster, which is said to embrace its victims and carry them away under water after the manner of the octopus, was "not uncommon round the Canaries," I was thankful to think I had never indulged in bathing.

AN OLD BALCONY

IX

GRAND CANARY (*continued*)

MANY of the residents of Las Palmas move to the Monte for the summer, but even in late spring most people are glad to get away from the town and the white dust, which by then is lying ankle deep on the roads. Monte is the only other place which the ordinary traveller will care to stay in, as the native inns in Grand Canary bear a bad reputation for discomfort and dirt, and the Monte makes a good centre for expeditions, besides being an entire change of air and scene.

The last part of the drive up from the town which is only some six or seven miles, affords good views of the lie of the land and makes one realise the immense length of the *barrancos* in this island. It appears never to be safe to assert the name of a *barranco*, as it is not uncommon for one ravine to have four or five different names in the course of its wanderings towards the sea. The great *barranco*

one looks down into from the road beyond Tafira is called at this point the Barranco del Dragonal.

A century ago this district was a mere expanse of cinders interspersed with the usual Canary plants which find a home in the most desolate of lava beds. Clumps of Euphorbias and its two inseparable companions, the miniature dragon tree, *Senecio Kleinia*, and the graceful *Plocama pendula* broke the monotony of the grey lava. Now the scene has changed and this once desolate region has been transformed into one of the most fertile districts of the island. On the terraced slopes vines flourish, whose grapes produce the best red Canary wine. Footpaths bordered with flowers lead through these countless acres of vineyards, recalling the fashion in Teneriffe of the flower borders, *passeios*, which lead through many of the banana plantations, showing that the owner of the land still had some soul for gardening and a love of flowers, as he spared a strip of the precious soil for flowers. Many an alley in early winter is gay with rows of poinsettias feeding and flourishing on the water and guano which is given to the crop with a lavish hand, or rows of scarlet and white geraniums flank rose trees, interspersed here and there with

great clumps of white lilies. The country in late spring is fragrant and gay from the bushes of Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*) which edge the lanes; their yellow blossoms are in charming contrast to the soft grey-green of the old agaves, which make such excellent hedges.

Just behind the Monte lies the great basin of the Caldera. It is best seen from the Pico de Bandama, a hill 1840 ft., which not only commands an excellent view of the crater, but of all the country round. The Gran Caldera de Bandama, a vast complete basin with no outlet, is over a mile across and 1000 ft. deep, and consequently is one of the most perfect craters in the world. The walls are formed of rocks and here and there vivid bits of colouring speak for themselves of its origin, and round the edge are layers of cinders. It is to be hoped that it will not some day come to life again and throw up a peak, as the basin of the Cañadas is supposed to have thrown up the great cone of the Peak of Teneriffe. It looks peaceable enough to-day, a mule track leading down into it. At the bottom of the crater vines are cultivated, and a farmer calmly lives on what was once a boiling cauldron.

The vines seem to thrive in the volcanic soil,

their roots go down deep in search of damper loam below, and this possibly helps to keep them free of disease, though in spring the effect of the tender green shoots with their long twining tendrils is sadly spoilt when, just as they are coming into flower, the mandate goes forth to dust the growth with sulphur. The men and women, who for the past weeks have been busy gathering in the potato crop, are now employed in sulphur dusting. For two months or more whole families are engaged with the potato harvest; the rows are either ploughed up with a primeval-looking plough, or hoed with the broad native hoe, which does duty for spade or fork in this country, and then the potatoes are collected with great rapidity, even the smallest member of the family helping, sorted and packed in deal boxes holding each some 60 or 70 lb., with a layer of palm fibre on the top, and shipped to England. It is well known that Canary new potatoes do not command a very good price in the English market, and I often wondered whether it is not the kind which is at fault. Kidney potatoes, which are regarded in England as the best for new potatoes, are hardly ever grown, the Spaniards regarding them with horror and loathing,

A BANANA CART

Banana Cart

and though English seed is imported annually, the result to my mind seemed unsatisfactory, as I never came across any young potatoes worthy of the name "new potatoes." Possibly the soil and climate are unsuited, and there is a tendency I was told in all varieties to excessive growth, and no doubt the green peas and broad beans, which are most suited to English soil, often here grow to mammoth proportions, giving a poor result as a crop, and it is only experience which proves which are the varieties best suited to the climate and soil. The peas which are grown from seed ripened in the island degenerate to tasteless, colourless specimens, producing tiny pods, with at the outside three peas in them, and the French beans have the same lack of flavour when grown from native seed.

Potatoes and tomatoes are both unfortunately liable to disease, and in some seasons the whole crop is lost. The same disease appears to affect both crops. Dr. Morris, when he visited the islands, thought seriously of the outlook, unless systematic action was taken. He says: "There is a remedy if carefully applied and the crop superintended, but the islanders seem to regard the

trouble with strange indifference, and go on the plan of 'If one crop fails, then plant another.'"

The volcanic soil appears to suit cultivated garden plants, as well as vines, bananas and potatoes, and the gardens in the neighbourhood of Telde are a blaze of colour and have a wonderful wealth of bloom in May, which is essentially the "flower month" in all the islands. Earlier in the winter it is true the creepers will have been at their best, and by now the last trumpet-shaped blooms will have fallen from that most gorgeous of all creepers, *Bignonia venusta*, and the colour will have faded from the bougainvilleas, red, purple, or lilac, though they seem to be in almost perpetual bloom. Allemandas flourish even at this higher altitude, as does *Thumbergia grandiflora*, another tropical plant. Though its bunches of grey-blue gloxinia-like blooms are beautiful enough individually, it is sadly marred by the dead blossoms which hang on to the bitter end and are singularly ugly in death, not having the grace to drop and leave the newcomers to deck the yards of trailing branches, with which the plant will in an incredibly short time smother a garden wall or take possession of and eventually kill a neighbouring tree. Roses

AN OLD GATEWAY

Old Fairway

seem to flourish and bloom so profusely that the whole bush is covered with blossoms, and a garden of roses would well repay the little care the plants seem to require. The Spaniards prefer to prune their roses but once a year, in January, but by pruning in rotation roses could be had all the year round, and certainly half the trees should be cut in October, after the plants have sent up long straggling summer growth, and by January a fresh crop would be in flower. But the native gardener is nothing if not obstinate, and if January is the month for pruning according to his ideas, nothing will make him even make an experiment by cutting a few trees at a different season, and in this month are cut creepers, trees and shrubs, utterly regardless as to whether it is the best season or not.

In most gardens the trees comprise several different Ficus, the Pride of India (*Melia Azedarach*), many palms, oranges, mangos and guavas, lagerstrœmias, pomegranates and daturas, while flower-beds are filled with carnations, stocks, cinerarias, hollyhocks and longiflorum lilies, all jostling each other in their struggle for room. The country people struck me as having a much greater love of flowers here than in Teneriffe, where a

cared-for strip of cottage garden or row of pot plants is almost a rare sight, and roof gardening is perhaps more the fashion. Geraniums and other hanging plants tumble over the edge of the flat roof tops, looking as though they lived on air, as the boxes or tins they are grown in are out of sight. Here the humblest cottager grew carnations, fuchsias, begonias, and pelargoniums with loving care in every old tin box, or saucepan, that he could lay hands on. One reason that pot plants are scarce is the enormous cost of flower-pots, which are mostly imported, and often if I wished to buy a plant, the price was more than doubled if the precious pot was to be included in the bargain. In May, the month especially consecrated to the Virgin Mary, all her chapels and wayside shrines are kept adorned with flowers. In the larger churches the altar and steps are draped with blue and white, and piled up with great white lilies whose heavy scent mingling with the incense is almost overpowering, but in the humbler shrines the offerings are merely the contributions of posies of mixed flowers, placed there probably by many a woman who is called after Our Lady. I was always struck by the number of way-side crosses and

tiny shrines in many of which a lamp shines nightly, and yet I cannot say the people seemed to be either reverent or deeply religious, and I was never able to obtain an explanation of the crosses one came across in unexpected places, even in the branches of trees in the garden. At first I thought they must be votive offerings in memory of an escape from danger, possibly a child who had fallen from the tree and escaped unhurt, but the gardener merely said it was *costumbre*, the custom of the country, and offered no further information. On May 3, the Fiesta de la Cruz, every cross, however humble, is decked with a garland of flowers, which often hangs there until the feast comes round again, and in front of many of the crosses a lamp is lighted on this one night in the year.

On holidays and Sundays the women, especially those who are on their way to Mass, wore their white cashmere mantillas, and I inquired whether this also had any connection with "Our Lady's" month of May, but I was told in old days they were the almost universal head-dress, a fashion which unfortunately is fast dying out. This appeared to be the only distinctively local feature of their dress, and the usual head-dress of the

women and children, with bright-coloured handkerchiefs folded closely round the forehead and knotted in the nape of the neck, is common to all the islands. When the family is in mourning even the smallest member of the household wears a black handkerchief matching its bright black eyes, but the day I fear is fast approaching when battered straw hats will take their place, not the jaunty little round hats with black-bound brims, which every country woman wears to act as a pad for the load she carries on her head. For generations the women have carried water-pots and baskets which many an English working man would consider a crushing load, and no one can fail to admire their splendid carriage and upright bearing, as they stride along never even steadying their load with one hand. The only peculiarity of the men's dress is their blanket cloaks ; in some of the islands they are made of *mantas* woven from native wool, but as often as not an imported blanket is used, gathered into a leather or black velvet collar at the neck. On a chilly evening in a mountain village every man and boy is closely wrapped in his *manta*, often it must be owned in an indescribable state of filth. At night they do duty as a

blanket on the bed, and in the day are dragged through dust or mud, but cleanliness is not regarded in Spanish cottages, where chickens, goats, and sometimes a pig all seem to share the common living-room.

I fear the few model dwellings which the tourist is invited to inspect at Atalaya (the Watch Tower) are not true samples of the average cottage or cave-dwelling. Atalaya was formerly a native stronghold, and one can quite imagine what formidable resistance the invaders must have met with from these primitive fortresses. The narrow ledges cut in the face of the cliffs made the approach to them almost inaccessible except to the Canarios, who appear to have been as agile as goats, and from the narrow openings showers of missiles could be hurled at the attackers. Atalaya at the present time is the home of the pottery makers. They fashion the local clay into pots with a round stone in just as primitive a way as did the ancient Canarios. They seem to live a life apart, and are regarded with suspicion by their neighbours, who rarely intermarry with them. The whole colony are inveterate beggars, old and young alike, but as tourists invade their domain in order to say they

have seen "the most perfect collection of troglodyte dwellings in the Archipelago," and request them to mould pots for their edification, it is perhaps not surprising that they expect some reward.

X

GRAND CANARY (*continued*)

Those who do not mind a long day and really early start can see a good deal of the country and make some very beautiful expeditions without facing the terrors of the native inn. When even our guide-book—and the writer of a guide-book is surely bound to make the best of things—warns the traveller that the "accommodation is poor," or that "arrangements can be made to secure beds," every one knows what to expect. So a long day, however tiring, is preferable, if it is possible to return the same night.

A drive of two hours leads to San Mateo, where good accommodation would be a great boon, as it is a great centre for expeditions, besides being beautifully situated near chestnut and pine woods. A rough mule track leads in something under three hours to the Cruz de Tejeda, which is about the finest excursion in the island. Good walkers will

probably prefer to trust their own legs rather than the mule's; but it is a stiff climb, as the starting-point, San Mateo, is only some 2600 ft. above the sea, while the Cruz is 5740 ft. Without descending into the deep Barranco which leads down to Tejeda itself, in clear weather the view is magnificent. That most curious isolated rock, the Roque Nublo, stands like a great pillar or obelisk, pointing straight into the heavens, rising 370 ft. above all its surroundings, and more than 6000 ft. above sea-level, and is often clearly visible from Teneriffe. The great valley of Tejeda lies stretched before the traveller, who is surely well rewarded for his climb by the splendid panorama. Deep precipitous ravines full of blue shadows lie in vast succession in front, and to the right the cultivated patches in the valley are a bright emerald green from the young corn, and over the deep blue sea beyond, towers the great Peak of Teneriffe, looking most majestic and awe-inspiring rising above the chain of high mountains which are veiled in a light, mysterious mist. Never, perhaps, is the great height of the mountain so well realised, as it stands crowning a picture which our guide-book tells us is "never to be forgotten,

and second to none in Switzerland or the Alps."

Another favourite expedition for the energetic is to the Cumbres, particularly for those who are bent on reaching the highest land in the island. The Pico de los Pechos is the highest point (6400 ft.), but the Montaña de la Cruz Santa, on the left, is generally chosen, as here parties of walkers and riders can meet, under the shadow of the Holy Cross, where, on the festivals of St. Peter and St. John, a religious *fiesta* is held. Before the wholesale deforestation took place, this district must certainly have been much more beautiful; now it is a silent, shadowless world, a desolate region of stony ground, over which run great *barrancos* looking like deep rents in the mountain sides. Probably no other island has suffered more cruelly from the axe of the charcoal-burner, and in the neighbourhood of Las Palmas everything has been cut which could be converted into charcoal, and nowadays that necessary article of life to the Spaniard has to be imported.

One of the most beautiful of all their native forests, the forest of Doramas, is hardly worthy of its name at the present time; scattered trees

on the mountain side are all that remains of one of the most beautiful of primeval forests, which was so celebrated in the days of the Canarios. Even in 1839, when Barker Webb and Berthelot visited the forest, they lamented over the destruction of the trees, and whole stretches of country which had formerly been pine and laurel woods were only covered with native heath. The prince Doramas, who is said to have lived in a grotto in the picturesque neighbourhood of Moya, gave his name to the mountain and forest, and these travellers visited his cave, which was still regarded with great veneration on account of the tales of the heroic and brave deeds and almost superhuman strength of the prince, which had been handed down from generation to generation. They found the door, or rather entrance, to the grotto draped with garlands of *Hibalbera* (*Ruscus androgynus*) and the scarlet-flowered *Bicacaro* of the Guanches (*Canarina campanulata*), as the spot was then solitary and deserted. Some years before the Spanish traveller Viera had been charmed by the beauty of the forest, and a translation of passages from his work on the "General History of the Canary Islands" will show what a treasure the

Spaniards have lost in allowing the destruction of the woods.

"Nature," he says, "is here seen in all her simplicity, nowhere is she to be found in a more gay or laughing mood; the forest of Doramas is one of the most beautiful of the world's creations from the variety of its immense straight trees, always green and scattering on all sides the wealth of their foliage. The sun has never penetrated through their dense branches, the ivy has never detached itself from their old trunks; a hundred streams of crystal water join together in torrents to water the soil which becomes richer and richer and more productive. The most beautiful spot of all in the depth of this virgin forest is called Madres de Moya; the singing of the birds is enchanting, and in every direction run paths easy of access; one might believe them to be the work of man, but they are all the more delightful because they are not. By following one of these paths one comes to the spot called by the Canarios, the Cathedral, an immense and complete dome of verdure formed by the meeting of the branches of the magnificent trees. Laurels raise their great trunks in colonnades, with their branches inter-

laced and bent into gigantic arcades, which produce a most marvellous effect. Advancing under their majestic shadow one discovers at every turn fresh views, and one's imagination, carried away by the tales of the ancients, is filled with poetic impressions. These enchanted regions are well worthy of the fictions of fables, and in the enthusiasm they give birth to when wandering in their midst, the Canarios appear to have lost nothing of their celebrity; these are still the Fortunate Islands and their shady groves the Elysium of the Greeks, the wandering place of happy souls."

The poet Cayrasco de Figueroa, who was known as the "divin Poête," and whose tomb is to be seen in one of the side chapels of the cathedral in Las Palmas, wrote verses in praise of the forest, which he must have seen in all its glory in 1581, and some fifty years later the venerable don Christobal de la Camara, Bishop of Grand Canary, travelled all through it and wrote of "the mountain of d'Oramas as one of the marvels of Spain: the different trees growing to such a height that it is impossible to see their summit: the hand of God only could have planted them,

isolated among precipices and in the midst of masses of rock. The forest is traversed by streams of water and so dense are its woods, that even in the days of greatest heat the sun can never pierce them. All I had been told beforehand of its beauties appeared fabulous, but when I had visited it myself I was convinced that I had not been told enough."

Between 1820 and 1830 the forest seems to have suffered much. At the former date some part of the woods remained in all their pristine beauty on the Moya side and the great Til (*Laurus fœtens*) trees round Las Madres were still standing, but ten years later, when Barker Webb and his companion visited this spot again, these splendid trees were shorn of their finest branches and the devastation of the woods had begun.

Long before this date the mountain appears to have become an apple of discord. Some influential landed proprietors demanded the division of the forest, the *communes* interfered, and eventually the question became a political one. Just as a settlement was arrived at the party in power fell and General Morales arrived on the scene, having been granted a large part of the forest by Ferdinand VII.

in recognition of his services, and the deforestation of the district began in earnest, in spite of local resistance to the royal decree.

In most of the islands some old pine has been given the name of the Pino Santo, and protected by a legend of special sanctity, but perhaps the Pino Santo of Teror was the most venerated of all. The tree, old historians tell us, was of immense size and grew adjoining the Chapel of Our Lady; so close, in fact, that one of its branches served as the foundation of the belfry. The unsteadiness of this strange foundation not unnaturally hastened the destruction of the little tower, and on April 3, 1684, the sacred tree, which collapsed from its great age and weight, threatened to crush the chapel beneath. The sacred image of Our Lady of the Pine was so named because it was said to have been found in the branches of the tree. This miraculous discovery was made after the conquest in 1483. The Canarios had often observed a halo of light round the tree which they did not even dare approach, but Don Juan de Frias, bishop and conqueror, more courageous than the rest, climbed into the branches of the tree and brought down a statue of the Virgin. He is said to have found the

THE CANARY PINE

image among thick branches and between two dragon trees, nine feet high, which were growing out of a hollow in the pine branches. The figure at once received the name of Nuestro Señora del Pino, the church, which has been built on the site of the old chapel, being dedicated to her. The spot on which stood the sacred tree is now marked with a cross, and a pine tree close by is said to be a descendant of the Pino Santo. Nor is this all the legend about this wonderful tree. A spring of healing water issued from beneath it, and here the faithful came to bathe and be healed of their ills. An avaricious priest thinking he would collect fees or alms from those who came to visit the spring, caused it to be enclosed by masonry and a door, which he kept locked, upon which the sacred spring dried up, and his schemes were defeated. Below the village to this day are some mineral springs dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes. Who knows, possibly this is the same sacred spring which has reappeared to benefit the sick.

XI

LA PALMA

Every one agrees that La Palma is almost the most beautiful of the group of seven Fortunate Isles, so it is all the more deeply to be deplored that there is not better communication between the little port of Santa Cruz de la Palma and Teneriffe or Grand Canary. At rare intervals during the winter, especially towards sunset, the island had emerged from the clouds in which it is usually enveloped and lain dark purple against a golden sunset sky, an omen which we had learnt to dread in Orotava, finding there was great truth in the saying of the country people, "When La Palma is to be seen, rain will come before two days," and sure enough the storm always came.

The little town of Santa Cruz, or La Ciudad as it is locally called, as if it was the only town in the world, is most picturesquely situated on steep slopes, very much resembling the situation of

Funchal in Madeira on a smaller scale. Possibly in days to come La Palma may have a great future before it as a tourist resort, when the new mole fulfils the hopes of natives and their port becomes a coaling-station for larger steamers. An hotel among the pine woods would certainly be very attractive, especially in spring, when the whole island is afoam with fruit blossom. At present a bad *fonda* is the only accommodation in Santa Cruz, and most people curtail their stay in consequence, and hurry away at the end of three days during which time the steamer has been at the neighbouring islands of Hierro and Gomera, or else they ride over to Los Llaños, spurred by the report of a very fairly comfortable inn. The island affords almost endless expeditions, especially to good walkers, as the tracks are bad and slippery for mules. Near Santa Cruz the Barranco de la Madera is the home of the Virgin de las Nieves, a very ancient and much venerated image of the Virgin, to whom the church is dedicated. Every five years this sacred figure is carried down to the sea in solemn procession, and the stone ship at the mouth of the great *barranco*, which is called after Our Lady of the Snows, is rigged and decked in

gala fashion with bunting. Not only from all parts of the island, but many devout Spaniards congregate to do honour to her, and a great *fiesta* takes place, which must be a curious and most interesting ceremony.

The Barranco del Rio is the most beautiful of all the walks in the neighbourhood. Like its namesake near Guimar in Teneriffe, it is a happy hunting-ground for the botanist, and those who have a steady head and do not mind narrow paths and precipices can wander far along through the gorge, where the beautiful rocks are clad with innumerable ferns and native plants.

In ancient days the Guanches gave the island the name of Benahoave, meaning "my country," which sounds as though they were so proud of the island when they took possession of it, probably sailing across from Teneriffe, that they meant to stick to it. The present name first appears on the old Medici map in Florence (1351), which is said to be the oldest chart of these waters. The name is supposed to have been given to the island by an expedition composed of Florentines, Genoese and Majorcans who had visited the Canaries some ten years before. It was probably the last-named who

christened the island La Palma, after the capital of Majorca, so at the time of the conquest, though the Spaniards introduced many changes in the way of laws, religion and agriculture, they did not change the European name by which the island had become known.

Webb and Berthelot when they visited the island in 1837 were loud in praise of the wealth and luxury of the vegetation, which in their opinion surpassed that of any other of the Canary group.

The island centres in the vast abyss of the Gran Caldera, which centuries ago was the boiling cauldron of a great crater. The islanders are immensely proud of their old crater, and always assert that the Peak of Teneriffe was merely thrown up by *their* volcano in one of its most terrific upheavals. As in the other islands at a certain elevation the region of laurels and other evergreen trees, in whose shade ferns flourish, is succeeded by the mammoth heaths, and higher still come the beautiful pine woods with their slippery carpet of pine needles on which both man and beast find a difficulty in keeping a footing. On the more arid slopes of parts of the Cumbre the scattered vegetation is more suggestive of Alpine regions. The above-mentioned

learned travellers attribute the presence of the immense number of apparently wild almond and other fruit trees to their having sown themselves from the original trees introduced to the island by the conquerors, who, determined to make the most of the climate and soil, set about to change the face of the land. The natural vegetation receded to the higher regions as the lower parts became more and more cultivated with almonds, vines, oranges, lemons and bananas, which up to then had been unknown in the island. In some districts woods of chestnut trees, which were also introduced, have taken the place of the virgin forest. To these two travellers also belongs the honour and glory of having discovered the Echium peculiar to the Island, and they at once gave it its local name, *Echium pininana*, though *nana* does not seem very appropriate to it, as it is anything but dwarf, growing to a height of 15 ft. with a dense spike of deep blue flowers. Several of the lovely Canary brooms appear to be indigenous to the island, and Professor Engler of Berlin, who visited La Palma last year, found the yellow-flowered *Cytisus stenopetalus* in two varieties, *palmensis* and *sericeus*, besides the graceful drooping

and sweet-scented white *Cytisus filipes* and *Retama rhodorrhizoides*, and the *Cytisus proliferus* common to most of the islands.

Most people prefer to visit the great crater from Los Llanos, an expedition occupying three days. The journey across the Cumbres *viâ* El Paso to Los Llanos is one of extreme beauty, as the vegetation begins very soon after leaving Santa Cruz, and at a height of only 1000 ft. the chestnut, laurel, and heath woods begin. The path winds through these enchanting woods until at a higher elevation the giant heaths alone are left. From the top of the Cumbre Nueva there is a magnificent view over the whole island, Santa Cruz nestling among the hills by the shore and in the far distance lie Teneriffe and Gomera. To the south is the old Cumbre, called Vieja in contradistinction to its newer neighbour; from one of its heights a stream of lava is said to have descended in 1585, which is probably the last occasion on which the volcano showed any activity. The dense vegetation covering some of the streams of lava speaks for itself of their great age, as it is said that not a particle of vegetation appears on lava until it has had four centuries in which to grow cold, and then the first

sign of returning life is a peculiar lichen which appears on the heaps of lava. The great mountain of Timé, whose black and forbidding precipice overhangs the Barranco de las Augustias, makes many a traveller wonder who first had the courage to make a path, steep and narrow though it is, down the face of the rock. Possibly the goatherds, *pastors*, first learnt the lie of the land, swinging themselves on their *lanzas* or long spiked poles from rock to rock with surprising agility, and then others not trained to this strange mode of progression made the paved track.

On the western slopes the pine woods soon commence, the splendid trees increasing in size until the sacred Pino de la Virgen is reached—a giant whose trunk measures some 25 ft. round. Hardly a traveller passes the shrine at its foot without dropping a coin, however humble, into the money-box which is kept for its support. How long the pine has been regarded as a holy tree, or for how many generations the lamp has been lighted nightly, I know not; but in 1830 Berthelot wrote: "This beautiful tree, said to be a contemporary of the Conquest, shows no sign of age; a little statue of the Virgin has been placed in the first fork of its

branches; every evening the woodcutters of the neighbourhood come silently and reverently to light the little lamp which hangs above the sacred image. At dusk, if one passes near the *Pino Santo*, this lamp, which shines alone in the depth of the forest, casting shadows on the leafy bower which protects this mysterious shrine, inspires one with a sense of deep feeling and dread. The presence of this tree, which has been made sacred and endowed with mysterious powers, caused me to feel for it the very greatest veneration."

Though the little village of El Paso is situated somewhat nearer to the Gran Caldera, few travellers stop there, as it does not boast of an inn, however humble, and to be taken as a "paying guest" does not appeal to many people. It is better to push on to Los Llanos, a pleasant village reached by a road from Tazaconte, which runs through orange groves, where in spring the air is heavy and sickly with the scent of the blossom, and then passing through almond groves and orchards of every kind of fruit tree, so to the very last the beauty of road is kept up, and the traveller is well repaid.

Though the expedition to the Gran Caldera is always described as a tiring one, the natives would

feel deeply hurt if any visitor to their island did not go to see their mighty crater. It is indeed mighty—a vast basin, measuring in places four to five miles across, and some 6500 to 7000 ft. deep; its very size makes it difficult to realise that it is a crater, and it might easily be regarded as merely a deep hollow among the mountains. Though its walls are great bare grey crags, the pine woods which clothe the lower slopes of the hills which rise from the bottom of the crater, in places the bottom itself being clothed with trees, make it all the less like an ordinary crater. Great deep ravines tear the base, and these in their turn have become pine woods, carpeted with soft and slippery pine needles which for centuries possibly have lain undisturbed. The Caldera is recommended as a camping-ground, as water, which in Palma is scarce, is to be found; in fact, innocent-looking dry stony beds may through rainy weather on the higher land suddenly become a roaring stream. Some people might think it too inaccessible a spot, but the solitude, and the sound of the wind whispering among the pines, would appeal to many. That the depth of the crater has altered since a bygone age is evident, as caves of the Haouarythes, the

aboriginal inhabitants of La Palma, are now absolutely inaccessible; nothing but a bird could reach the entrance to them. The action of water is said to account for this; possibly underground streams broke loose after a plutonic effort and upheaval of the volcano, and the upper crust subsided.

Peasants are still to be seen wearing the peculiar hood or *montera* made of dark brown woollen cloth lined with red flannel, in shape like a sou'-wester, turned up in front fitting closely to the head, the flap hanging behind lined with red, or sometimes if the flap is not required as a protection against the weather the corners are buttoned over the peak in front. The *mantas*, blanket cloaks, are all made of wool woven in the island. These are both articles of men's dress. The women's caps have no flaps, and are very ugly, and the picturesque dress which survived for a time in Breña Baja is now extinct altogether, as are also the tiny round hats made from the pith of the palm.

XII

GOMERA

Gomera is seldom visited by tourists, but a flying visit can be paid to it during the stay of the inter-insular boat which plies between the islands. In summer its higher land and woods would be an ideal camping-ground for a traveller with tents, and the climate is said to be very good. The soil appears to be extremely rich and well repays the cultivator, but the Cumbres are still clad with beautiful woods, which up to now have escaped from the destructive charcoal-burners. The soil of the island is volcanic, but it is one of the few of the group which cannot boast of an old crater, and the highest point is only about 4400 ft. A remarkable feature of the vegetation is the entire absence of pines; there are none at the present time, and old historians always comment on their absence. This in itself showed ancient writers the approximate height of the island, as nowhere is the native *Pinus*

canariensis found in its natural conditions under 4000 ft. above sea level, while in the region below that altitude *Erica arborea* flourishes. In Gomera the heaths attain larger dimensions than in any other island, and grow into real trees, and on the beautiful expedition from San Sebastian, the port, to Valle Hermoso (the Beautiful Valley), which appears well to deserve its name, the traveller passes through a succession of well-watered and wooded country and lovely forest scenery, said to be unsurpassed in the Canaries. San Sebastian was formerly of more importance than it is now, as in old days its naturally sheltered harbour was much valued by navigators.

It was probably for this reason that it became the favourite anchorage of Christopher Columbus on his voyages of discovery. He first called at Puerto de la Luz, in Grand Canary, in order to repair the damage done to one of his fleet, but leaving his lieutenant in charge of the damaged ship, Columbus himself sailed to Gomera on August 12, 1492. On this occasion he stayed for eleven days, returning to Grand Canary to pick up La Pinta, but he again called at Gomera on September 1. He appears to have spent a week

in storing provisions, and several sailors from Gomera joined his expedition. On his second voyage he returned to his old anchorage, this time again picking up sailors, and as he had a much larger fleet of vessels under his command, besides plants and seeds he embarked cows, sheep, goats, pigs and chickens, all of which he wished to introduce to the country he had already discovered, a fact which has been of great interest to zoologists who had been puzzled to determine the true race of many animals found in the West Indies. Twice again he visited Gomera, so there is no doubt it was his favourite port of call. Some old historians assert that for a time he lived in Gomera. At San Sebastian an old house is still pointed out as having belonged to him. After his marriage in Lisbon with a daughter of the Portuguese navigator Perestrello, for some years little seems to be known of the admiral's doings. The inhabitants of Madeira claim that he lived in a house in Funchal, while other writers affirm that he lived in Gomera and speak of his return to "his old domicile" after one of his voyages.

In old days the inhabitants were called Ghomerythes, and after the conquest of the

SAN SEBASTIAN

SAN SEBASTIÁN, GOMERA Island

island by the Spaniards, which did not prove a difficult matter, as though the islanders were a brave little band they knew little or nothing of the art of warfare, the conquerors enlisted the services of the natives to help them in attacking the other islands. The island was not left entirely undisturbed even after the conquest, as Sir Francis Drake made several attempts to take the island in 1585, and five years later a Dutch fleet under Vanderdoes invaded the town. On the walls of the quaint old church in San Sebastian are paintings showing the repulse of the Dutch fleet in the harbour in 1599. The Moors in the seventeenth century attacked and burnt a great part of the town.

A peculiarity of the island is the strange whistling language, which probably in ancient times was in universal practice, but is now more or less confined to one district, the neighbourhood of the Montaña de Chipude, being very rarely used by the natives in San Sebastian, who have most of them lost the art. The best whistlers can make themselves heard for three or four miles, and in the whistling district all messages are sent in this way, which no doubt is of the greatest convenience

where telegrams are unknown and deep *barrancos* separate one village from another. The greatest adepts in the art do not use their fingers at all, and by mere intonations and variations of two or three notes a sufficiently elaborate language has been invented to enable a conversation to be carried on. The following may possibly be a traveller's tale, but it shows the use which can be made of the language: "A landed proprietor from San Sebastian with farms in the south took lessons secretly. The next time he visited his tenants he heard his approach heralded from hill to hill, instructions being given to hide a cow here or a pig there, and so on, in order that he should not claim his *medias* or share of the same." The writer of the above himself heard the following short message given: "There is a *caballero* here who wants a letter taken to San Sebastian. Tell Fulano to take this place on his way and fetch it." This was at once understood and acted upon. If any doubt is held as to the accuracy of the message, the answer comes to repeat, and when understood the receiver answers back, "Aye, aye." It is to be hoped that the practice will not entirely die out, as I believe the whistling language of Gomera is unique.

XIII

FUERTEVENTURA, LANZAROTE AND HIERRO

The three islands of Fuerteventura, Lanzarote, and Hierro, complete the group of seven Fortunate Isles, as the little satellites of Graciosa, Alegranza, Montaña Clara, are hardly more than large rocks, uninhabited and only visited occasionally by fishermen.

Fuerteventura, though by no means a very small island, being over 60 miles long and about 18 miles broad, has remained in a primitive and unexploited condition, because in spite of the fertility of the soil, which is said to be remarkable, the scarcity of water is great and the inhabitants are entirely dependent on the rainfall. In a good year, namely a rainy year, the island grows a very good wheat crop, almost larger than that of any other island, but the absence of fresh-water springs, or the apathy of the natives in not making use of

what there are, has prevented any agricultural development. The island has no pine forest and trees are scarce : great parts of it are barren, sandy and rocky plains, and the little vegetation there is, is said to resemble that which is found in certain parts of the northern deserts of Africa. Its highest point is only about 2700 ft. and is called Orejas de Asno (Ass's Ears), situated in the sandy peninsula at the extreme south of the island. At the present time travellers are warned that drinking water is scarce, nasty, and frequently has to be paid for. Whether the island is even drier than it was at the beginning of last century I know not, but Berthelot and his companion remark that there were many good springs, which even in July, the driest month, were cool and clear, but were allowed to waste themselves, no trouble being taken to collect the water either for irrigation or domestic use.

Both Fuerteventura and the neighbouring island of Lanzarote are given a distinctly African appearance by the extensive use of camels as beasts of locomotion and burden, donkeys even being comparatively uncommon and difficult to procure, so communication between the

A SPANISH GARDEN

villages is almost entirely carried on by means of camels.

Lanzarote received its name from a corruption of the Christian name of a Genoese, Captain Lancelot de Malvoisel, and in the old Medici map the island is marked with the Genoese coat of arms to show that it belonged to that town.

Though not as near the African coast as Fuerteventura, which is only about 60 miles from Cape Juby, the island is very African in aspect in places, the camels, the vast stretches of blown sand and the absence of vegetation being suggestive of the Sahara.

The few springs in the north of the island are utilised for growing crops of wheat and tomatoes, but are not of sufficient size to allow of any extensive plan of irrigation, and in the south the inhabitants depend entirely on rain water.

Lanzarote is almost the most volcanic of all the islands, and between 1730 and 1737 no fewer than twenty-five new craters opened, so it is not to be wondered at that the inhabitants were much alarmed when fresh disturbances were felt in the summer of 1824. In a series of letters written by Don Augustin Cabrera, an inhabitant of the island

at the time, an excellent account is given of the eruptions. A slight earthquake preceded the sudden appearance of a new crater in the early morning of July 1, 1824, in the neighbourhood of Tao, in the centre of a plain. The crater, which at first had the appearance of a great crevasse, emitted showers of sand and red hot stones, and did great damage to the surrounding country, destroying some most valuable reservoirs, and it was even feared that Tiagua, though a long distance away, would be destroyed, as a *montañeta* in the district began to smoke. On September 16, the writer says that after eighteen hours the crater had ceased its shower of hot ashes, but a dense column of smoke spouted forth, and the rumbling could be heard for miles round, and from the *montañeta*, which at first had only smoked, came a torrent of boiling water. "Yesterday," says the writer, "after there had been comparative quiet for some time, a loud noise was heard, and the boiling water spouted forth in torrents. At times there is dense smoke, which clears away, and then comes the water again." Writing in October he gives a most graphic and alarming account of an eruption on September 29, when the volcano burst through

the lava deposit of 1730, and flaming torrents flowed down to the sea. A noise like loud thunder had continued unceasingly, and prevented the inhabitants from sleeping, even many miles away. No wonder they dreaded a repetition of the disasters of 1730–37, as in two months two new craters had opened. On October 18 another letter says: "There is no doubt a furnace is under our feet. For twelve days the volcano had appeared dead, though frequent shocks of earthquake warned us such was not the case, and true enough yesterday the volcano burst through a bed of lava in the centre of a great plain, sending up into the air a column of boiling water 150 ft. high." It is also said that for several days the heat was suffocating, and sailors could scarcely see the island because of the dense mist.

The island has been a source of the deepest interest to geologists, and both M. Buch and Webb and Berthelot visited it between 1820–38, spending many weeks in the island. Few travellers seem to find their way there now, as there is no port and no mole passengers have to be carried ashore.

The little island of Graciosa, only five miles long

and a mile broad, separated from Lanzarote by the narrow strait of El Rio, is a broad stretch of sand covered with shells, but the three principal cones in the island are said to be volcanic, and show the origin of the island. After autumn rains, the sand is covered with herbaceous plants, and in old days the inhabitants of the north of Lanzarote used to transport their cattle to feed there.

Montaña Clara, hardly more than a rock some 300 ft. high, lies to the north of Graciosa, and Allegranza, the "Joy" of Bethencourt, as it was the first soil on which he set foot, is to the north again, and is really the first island of the Canary Archipelago, so it consequently boasts of a lighthouse. The possession of the island in old days was a matter of much dispute, as the feathers of a bird (*Larus Marinus*) were very valuable, and nearly as profitable as the down of the eider; also puffins, which existed here in vast numbers, were salted and sold, and now a small amount of fish-curing is done on the island at certain seasons. The greater part of the island is taken up by a crater of considerable extent, so even this tiny island is not without its Gran Caldera.

Hierro, the Isle of Iron, is to the extreme south-

west of the Canary Archipelago, and for several centuries was probably regarded by ancient navigators as the most western point in the world—beyond lay the unknown. The name is a corruption by the Spaniards of the word *heres*, which in the language of the original Ben-bachirs, whose name was in its turn changed to Bembachos, meant a small reservoir or tank for collecting rain water. As the island is almost entirely dependent on the rainfall these tanks were of the greatest value to the natives, and in old records it is stated that a *here* was much more valued in a marriage settlement than land. The theory that the island was called *hierro*, meaning iron, because of the presence of the metal in the island is not much regarded, as we are especially told by old historians that when Bethencourt attacked the island the natives were armed with lances which had *not* iron heads, and the historian adds, the only iron these natives knew was from the chains of their oppressors, who appear to have treated them with great cruelty.

The excessive moisture of the air and the presence of a fair amount of wooded country which attracts the moisture, enables the flocks of sheep

to live on the natural vegetation. The only water they get is from eating leaves of plants when saturated with dew, their principal fodder being the leaves and even roots of asphodel, also mulberry and fig leaves. Hierro is especially celebrated for its figs, which are the best grown in any of the islands, and extremely free fruiting. One tree alone may bear 400 lb. of fruit.

The best-known springs are those of Los Llanillos, which furnishes the best drinking water in the islands, being said to be always clear and cold, and the spring of Sabinosa. The latter is warm, smells of sulphur, and has a bitter taste and medicinal properties. One of Bethencourt's chaplains mentions that it has a great merit: "When you have eaten till you can eat no more, you then drink a glass of this water, and after an hour all the meat is digested, and you feel just as hungry as you did before you began, and can begin all over again!"

There is no sea-port village, the landing-place consisting merely of a small cove sheltered by masses of fallen rock, and the little capital of Valverde lies two hours distant on foot. As practically no accommodation is to be relied on, those

who are bent on exploring the island are recommended to provide themselves with a tent. The vegetation is said to be of great interest to botanists, and they appear to be the only travellers who ever visit the island.

XIV

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Few people, until they are proposing to pay a visit to the "Fortunate Islands," a name by which the group of seven Canary Islands seems to have been known since very early days, ever trouble themselves to learn anything of their history. Beyond the fact that they belong to Spain, a piece of information probably surviving from their schoolroom days, they have never troubled their heads about them, and I have known a look of surprise come over the face of an Englishwoman on hearing a Spaniard mention a fact which probably dated "from before the Conquest, quite five centuries ago," entirely forgetting that "the Conquest" could mean anything but the English conquest, instead of the conquest of the Canary Islands by the Spaniards at the latter end of the fifteenth century.

Possibly the reason that so few authentic records

remain of their ancient history is that though the outlying islands of the group are only some 80 or 100 miles from the African coast, still they were on the extreme limit of the ancient world. The various theories that they were really the home of the Hesperides, or the garden of Atlas, King of Mauretania, where the golden apple was guarded by the dragon, the Peak being the Mount Atlas of mythology, or again that they were merely the remains of the sunken continent of Atlantis, can never really be settled, but it seems almost certain that they were not entirely unknown to the ancients. The fact that Homer mentions an island "beyond the Pillars of Hercules," as the Straits of Gibraltar were called, has caused the adoption of the Pillars of Hercules, with a small island in the distance surmounted with *Oce ano*, as one of the coats of arms of the Islands, though the more correct one appears to be the two large dogs (because of the two native dogs which were taken back to King Juba about 50 B.C., when he sent ships from Mauretania to inspect Canaria) supporting a shield on which is depicted the seven islands. Herodotus in his description of the countries beyond Libya says that, "the world ends

where the sea is no longer navigable, in that place where are the gardens of the Hesperides, where Atlas supports the sky on a mountain as conical as a cylinder." Hesiod says that "Jupiter sent dead heroes to the end of the world, to the Fortunate Islands, which are in the middle of the ocean." There is no doubt that the Romans, on re-discovering the Islands, christened them *Insulæ Fortunatæ*, which name has clung to them ever since.

Pliny, in writing about the islands, quotes the statements of Juba, who said the islands were placed at the extreme limit of the world, and were perpetually clothed with fire.

It is unfortunate that the Spaniards, when they conquered the islands, took no trouble to preserve any of their ancient records, and as the natives could not write, any history which might have been handed down from generation to generation was entirely lost. For this reason very little is known for certain as to what happened to the islands in the Middle Ages, though they appear to be mentioned by an Arabian geographer in the early part of the twelfth century, who writes of "the island of the two magician brothers, Cheram and Clerham, from

which, in clear weather, smoke could be seen issuing from the African coast." Various European countries, having heard tales of islands beyond the seas, appear to have made efforts to conquer them. The fate of the Genoese expedition in A.D. 1291 is not known, and though the French are said to have "discovered" them in 1330, it was the Portuguese who took advantage of this discovery, and a few years later sent an expedition to conquer them. They met with no success, and were repulsed by the inhabitants of Gomera, and though they made yet another attempt after a few years, it appears to have been without result.

No doubt the comparative peace which reigned in the islands for so long was owing to the fact that Europe was too much occupied with civil wars and crusades, to explore and conquer far-off lands, but during the fourteenth century a French nobleman of Spanish extraction was made "King of the Fortunate Islands" by the Pope, and told to Christianise them in the best way he could. Nothing much seems to have come of these instructions, though some missionaries were no doubt sent to Grand Canary.

The conquest of the islands seems to have occupied the Spaniards for nearly a century, as in

1402 we read of Jean de Bethencourt (a name still common in the islands), who fitted out a ship for the purpose of conquering them and settling there. Lanzarote was peaceably occupied, as its fighting population was small, but in the neighbouring island of Fuerteventura he was repulsed. Henry King of Castille provided reinforcements, and, on condition that the Archipelago should be annexed in his name, Bethencourt was to be made "Lord of the Isles" of four of the group. The four smaller islands were soon brought under subjection — Fuerteventura, Lanzarote, Gomera, and Hierro; in fact, in some of the islands the newcomers were welcomed. The three larger islands—Canary, Teneriffe, and La Palma—proved a more serious undertaking, and the invaders being stoutly resisted and lacking in forces, their conquest was for a time abandoned, and Bethencourt did not live to see them subjugated. His nephew sold his rights to the Portuguese, which complicated matters. It was not until 1464 that any determined attack was again made, though Spanish troops had made an unsuccessful attempt to conquer La Palma some ten years previously.

The Lord of Gomera, Diego de Herrera, made

most determined attacks in 1464, beginning unsuccessfully in Canary ; but in the same year he again collected his forces and attacked Teneriffe, landing at Santa Cruz. Don Diego, having been driven into a corner by the Canarios, sent his son-in-law, Diego da Silva, to make a counter-attack. He fared no better, and escape being cut off, offered to surrender, but quarter was denied. By a stratagem a Canario leader was seized as a hostage, and Silva demanded free passage to his ship, which was granted. Silva had misgivings as to the sincerity of the Canarios, and apparently was so glad to escape with his life, that when he arrived at his ship he and all his men voluntarily gave up their arms, and vowed never again to fight the Canarios—a vow which Silva, at any rate, kept, in spite of the indignation of Diego. Some of the men broke their promise, and joined Diego's attacking forces again ; and on being taken prisoners by the natives, instead of being put to death were condemned to spend their lives in brushing away flies, as execution was too high an honour for such base creatures.

Some years after, the "fly-flappers" were set at liberty, as Diego succeeded in making a treaty with the Canarios ; but the island was far from

being conquered, and still offered stout resistance, though the Spaniards seem by now to have determined not to let such a prize escape them. Reinforcements came from Spain, and a small body of cavalry, we are told, terrorised the natives, and though the Portuguese interfered on behalf of the Canarios, the Spaniards now got a footing in the island in the year 1478, during the reign of Ferdinand V. of Castille.

After many unsuccessful attacks from the other islands, it fell to the lot of Don Alonso de Lugo to complete the work of Jean de Bethencourt. "De Lugo el Conquistador, and afterwards Governor of the Province of the Canaries, was a Galician nobleman, who had served with distinction against the Moors in the conquest of Granada, and had been presented with the valley of Ageste (Canary) in return for his services. Whilst there he conceived the capture of Teneriffe and of La Palma, reconnoitring their coasts and acquainting himself with their geographical features."

Helped by the inhabitants of Gomera, who by this time had become accustomed to the rule of the conquerors, De Lugo made a desperate though unsuccessful attempt in 1491 to conquer

La Palma, which had remained in comparative peace for over half a century. It was not till 1492, after months of desperate fighting, that he succeeded in subduing the island and adding it as a prize to the dominions of Spain.

A year later he turned his attention to Teneriffe and landed at Añaza (Santa Cruz). He hoped that quarrels among the Guanches might be in his favour, but after a considerable number of his men had been cut to pieces at Matanza (Place of Slaughter) he was forced to retire, and after a year's fighting evacuated the island, until reinforcements were sent to him. Before the close of the same year he returned to the attack, and desperate resistance was met with in the district of La Laguna. The Guanches, though successful in keeping the invaders at bay, were much discouraged by losing several of their leaders, and began to quarrel among themselves; how long they might still have held out it is impossible to know, but Providence seems at this moment to have come to the help of the Spaniards.

The disease known as *Modorra*, possibly some form of typhus fever, broke out among the Guanches. Old writings describe this disease as being most

malignant and mysterious, and its effects among the natives were appalling. The Spaniards remained immune, but I should think it was not without qualms that they watched the ghastly destruction of their foes, who appear to have been seized with hopeless melancholia, lost all wish to live, and wandered about listlessly in troops or laid down in caves to die. One writer says: "Even at the present day such retreats are occasionally discovered, little heaps of bones or seated skeletons marking the spot where the despairing victims sank to rise no more. It is said that some Spaniards, reconnoitring on the road to La Laguna, met an old woman seated alone on the Montaña de Taco, who waved them on, bidding them go in and occupy that charnel-house where none were left to offer opposition."

De Lugo seems to have passed through the district of the *modorra*, but met with resistance in the valley of Orotava, where the Mencey of Taoro (the old name of Villa Orotava) advanced to meet him with a considerable force. Another sanguinary engagement took place at La Victoria and the invaders again had to retreat. The *modorra* still raged, and in 1496 the site of the

present villages of Realejo Alto and Bajo, in the valley of Orotava, was the scene of the final capitulation of the Guanches, worn out by illness and perpetual fighting.

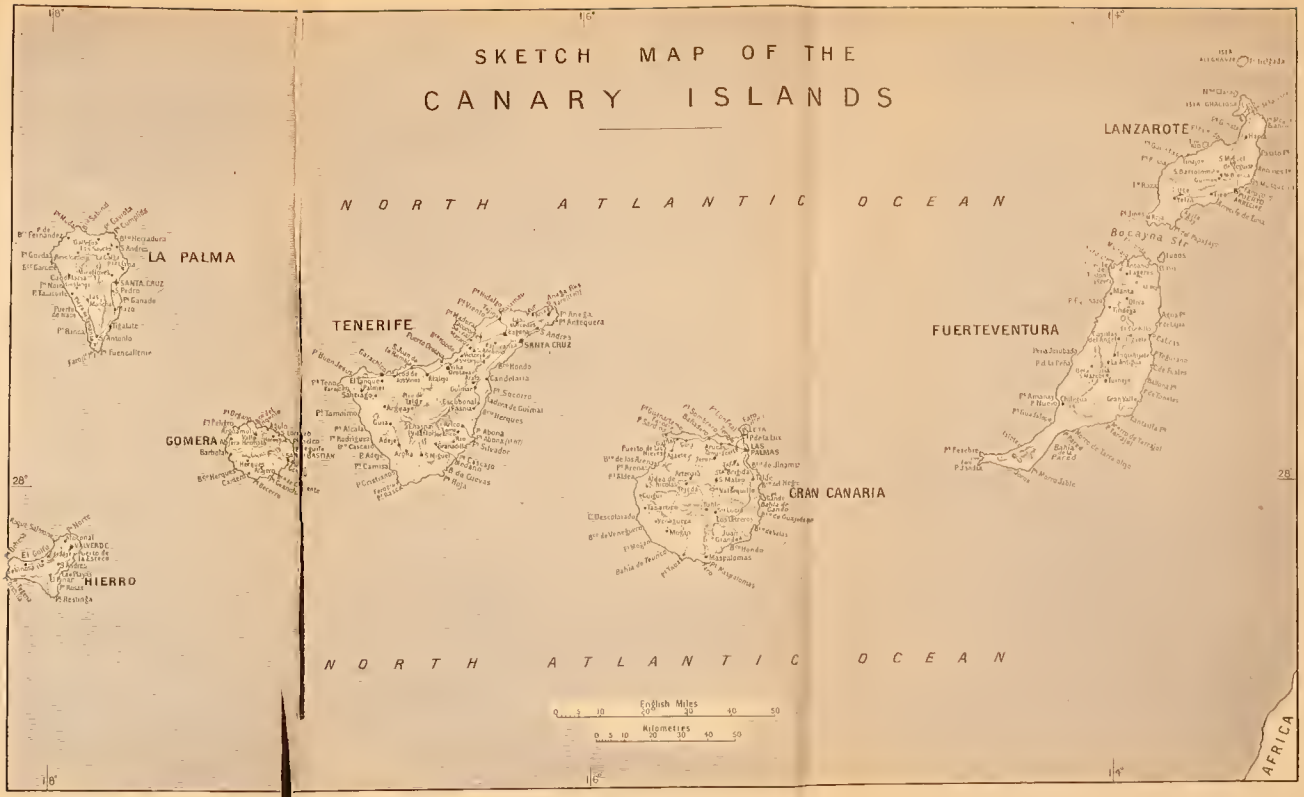
It is not altogether surprising that other countries looked rather longingly at Spain's new possession, and both their Portuguese neighbours and the Moors made one or two feeble attempts to claim them.

England was not above making several attacks on the Islands. One unsuccessful expedition commanded by Sir Francis Drake was repulsed at Las Palmas in 1595, and about sixty years later Sir Robert Blake, in command of 36 vessels, attacked Santa Cruz, in Teneriffe, but beyond destroying forts, the shipping in the harbour, and sinking some treasure galleons, he does not seem to have done much. The English again disturbed the peace of the islanders in 1743, but Admiral Nelson's attack of Santa Cruz in 1797 is the one which is of principal interest to the English, from the fact probably that it was Nelson's one defeat, and here also he lost his arm. To this day Nelson's two flags are carefully preserved in glass cases on the walls of the Iglesia de la Concepcion

and are an object of great interest to many English travellers. The news that a galleon laden with treasure had arrived in Santa Cruz reached Admiral Jervis during the blockade of Cadiz, and he at once ordered Vice-Admiral Nelson, in command of 1500 men and 393 guns, to proceed to Teneriffe to secure the coveted prize. The Spanish authorities were formally demanded to deliver up the treasure on July 20, 1797, and not unnaturally refused. The town seems to have been strongly garrisoned, and Nelson, hampered by an unfavourable wind, made unavailing attempts to land and draw the soldiers from their forts. Under cover of darkness 700 men succeeded in getting close to the mole before the enemy discovered them, but soon a deadly fire was opened upon them, and several of the boats were sunk. Nelson had no sooner set foot on the jetty than his arm was shattered by a cannon ball. Incapacitated though he was by pain and loss of blood, directly he got back alongside his ship his first thought was for the men who had been left behind, and orders were at once given for the boat to go back to their assistance. The men who had succeeded in landing on the mole, encouraged by repulsing the enemy

and spiking their guns, made a desperate attempt to attack the town. Their opponents were too numerous for this brave little band, and the guns from the Fort of San Christobal killed the greater number of their officers and wounded the rest; the survivors retreated in good order after holding their position on the mole nearly all night. In consequence of the darkness a party under Captain Trowbridge became separated and eventually landed at the other side of the town, and took possession of the old Dominican Monastery. Taking it for granted that Nelson's party were in possession of the mole, and advancing to meet them, Trowbridge demanded the surrender of the fort, only to find that his enemy and not his friends were the victors. Eventually, seeing that success was impossible, he asked for permission to leave the town with al. arms, and promised not to attack any part of the Canaries, or in the event of these conditions being refused he threatened to burn and sack the town. It is well known in history how courteously (once the evacuation terms were agreed to) the Spaniards treated their foe. The wounded were carefully tended, the invaders were allowed to buy provisions, and presents were interchanged between the greatest

of England's Admirals and Don Antonio Gutierrez, the Comandante-General of the Canaries, and it is said that the first letter Nelson wrote with his left hand was to thank the Spanish general for his care of his wounded men. After Nelson's attack the Canaries appear to have remained in the undisputed possession of Spain, and were made a province of the Mother Country, Santa Cruz, Teneriffe, being made the capital and seat of government, somewhat to the annoyance of the other islands. Those who are really interested in the history of the conquest of the Islands will find that there are many histories written in Spanish, most of which are to be seen in the great public library at La Laguna.



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